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December 2010

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AHEAD OF THE vote on the hosting of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, FIFA has sought to shoot the messenger by attacking the tactics of the *Sunday Times* in exposing corruption in the voting process.

Yet the *Sunday Times* should be praised for its investigative work. Contrary to what Sepp Blatter claims, entrapment is a wholly legitimate tactic. The hard, uncomfortable truth for the FIFA president is that anyone who was clean would not have fallen for the Sunday Times sting.

The English World Cup bid could now be punished for the legitimate actions of a newspaper whose reports – because they are in English – travel further around the world than no less important reports in other languages.

It would be foolish for Blatter and the other executive committee members to think that rejecting England's claims on the 2018 World Cup will somehow make the issue of corruption less visible. Irrespective of who wins the vote on December 2, there is now such a strong mood for more transparency – annual publication of Blatter's annual salary package would be a start – and that can only be a good thing.

A corrupting culture has existed at FIFA for years, as we have recorded on these pages on many previous occasions. The first-class, five-star lifestyle enjoyed by exco members (and their families) deserves to come under greater scrutiny. FIFA can no longer be left to police itself from a gold-plated bunker in Zurich. Wider debate is vital. For the game, for the world.

Away from the politicking, we preview the Club World Cup (page 86) and publish a list of young players who will be vital figures for their respective national teams in years to come. The media, *World Soccer* included, is often guilty of promoting young players before their time. But by picking one key player from each country, we hope we have avoided such a trap.

As ever, let me know what you think.

GAVIN HAMILTON, Editor
gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com

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Catch me if you can...Marseille's Mathieu Valbuena escapes the chasing Lille midfield

No way through...Milan's Zlatan Ibrahimovic struggles to get past the Real Madrid defence

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Where eagles dare...Lazio mascot Olimpia is paraded before the Rome derby

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Brian Glanville

... on Russia's World Cup bid...FIFA's ethics committee...and Manchester United's latest signing

IT LOOKS AS IF Russia will beat England to the punch and get the 2018 World Cup, which would be a scandal. I write this not as a chauvinist, although I believe, as even the Russians admit, that at this moment England is far more ready to put on a World Cup than Russia.

Even if the Football Association is in a seeming state of flux and chaos with David Dein, the obvious choice to become new chairman and thus in the driver's seat, now potentially blocked by the sudden, surprising and surely unwelcome candidature of Roger Burden, a businessman rather than a major football figure. Burden has chosen to contest the role he has been filling as stopgap, even though he had previously endorsed Dein's own candidature.

In international football terms, Burden is a nonentity and his action has weakened the English World Cup bid at a vital time. Dein may not be universally popular – his beloved Arsenal indeed cast him out after disagreements with the board, though selling his shares to the Uzbek billionaire Alisher Usmanov may have been some consolation, given their reported £70million price – but the Gunners will be eternally in his debt for bringing them Arsene Wenger.

Meanwhile, hypocrisy rules both with Russia and FIFA, who after so flamboyantly deploying their "Kick out Racism" campaign for years, have now intimated that the question will have no effect on the choice of the ensuing World Cup hosts.

Russian football, you might say, may almost be seen as the very cradle of racism. When Dick Advocaat, the prominent Dutch manager, was in charge of Zenit St Petersburg he admitted that he dared not sign a black player for fear of the violent consequences. In parenthesis, one might mention that very recently 50 hooligan supporters of Zenit invaded a local hotel and attacked fans of Hajduk Split who were lodged there.

West Bromwich Albion, meanwhile, have been the beneficiaries of the racism of supporters of Lokomotiv Moscow, who succeeded in driving out the talented and incisive Nigeria attacker Peter Odemwingie, putting up, when he had gone, a tasteless banner thanking West Bromwich and decorating it with a banana. There was also the case of racist behaviour by Russia fans during an international against Andorra, promptly officially denied, then admitted, by the same chief executive.

Hate mob...Lokomotiv Moscow fans drove out Nigeria's Odemwingie

> "Russian football, you might say, may almost be seen as the very cradle of racism"

As for the ludicrous diatribes against London and our own football, possibly intended to provoke the angry reaction by the FA that it has, one can only reflect that people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. And what glass houses! If London is, as we are told by Alexei Sorokin, leader of Russia's 2018 bid, the most criminal and alcoholic city in Europe, what of Russia, where gangsters rule and steal and murder?

A former KGB agent, now a parliamentarian who defies extradition, actually came to London to poison a dissident ex-colleague. A brave journalist, Anna Politovskaya, recovered after being poisoned on an aeroplane, but was later shot dead outside her Moscow apartment building. Ex-KGB officers do much as they wish – oppose them when they take over your business and you are liable, as happened to one poor recent victim, to die wretchedly and mysteriously in jail.

HOW astonishing to be told, in the wake of the *Sunday Times'* devastating revelations of corruption among executive members, that FIFA have an ethics committee. What has it been doing all these alarming years since Joao Havelange ousted our own Stanley Rous from the FIFA presidency in Frankfurt just before the 1974 World Cup in a coup engineered thanks to the votes of African FIFA members whom Havelange brought to Frankfurt with money obtained from the Brazilian confederation over which he presided?

All this has been relentlessly exposed in David Yallop's alarming, depressing but all too horribly cogent book *How They Stole The Game*. And having thus seized power, scandal upon scandal, Havelange kept it for the next 24 years. What does that tell you in particular about the European countries, not least our own?

Major players...Johansson, Blatter and Havelange

Indeed, when it came to appointing Havelange's successor, who seemed all but certain to be Sweden's trustworthy Lennart Johansson, the Football Association, under chief executive Graham "The Jelly" Kelly and the Southampton coroner Keith Wiseman abruptly changed their vote from Johansson to Sepp Blatter, then FIFA secretary. He against all seeming odds won the vote, thanks, according to Yallop, to the lavish support of the mega-rich Emir of Qatar – which Blatter has always denied. Qatar, of course, is now one of the countries under suspicion of vote rigging.

It was in vain for the once general secretary, the decent Helmut Kaser – Yallop, again – to abjure Havelange that the money coming in from Coca-Cola was FIFA's and not his own. Kaser didn't last and suffered perhaps "the most unkindest cut of all" when Blatter married his daughter, which brought him to tears.

My resourceful *Sunday Times* colleagues had two members of FIFA's voting committee bang to rights, both Amos Adamu and Reynald Temarii demanding vast sums of money to favour what they were tricked into believing was an attempt to facilitate a phantom American bid to stage the 2022 World Cup.

Several other leading figures have been potentially embroiled, but it was something of a shock when the investigators described how the former FIFA secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen had offered to become a conduit to other biddable committee members. The same Zen-Ruffinen who had impressed me as an honest crusader when he criticised Blatter's regime at the FIFA congress which preceded the 2002 World Cup, to be sacked, needless to say, not long after.

At least the head of the ethics committee, Claudio Sulser, once a fine Swiss centre-forward, seems determined to find out the truth, but when Blatter says, plaintively, "trust us", surely, to paraphrase a famous coinage by George Orwell, a great raspberry goes up all over the football world.

THE Rooney affair ended in somewhat squalid anticlimax. He got his inflated £200,000 a week and flew off, not into the sunset but into the sunshine of Dubai, where he reportedly quarrelled with his wife. Meanwhile, such are the splendid ironies of football, Javier Hernandez, alias *"Chicharito"* (the little pea) gave two dazzling performances for United in Rooney's sunbathing absence, implicitly ridiculing his complaint that the club weren't reinforcing the team to his fancy. Hernandez is clearly one of Alex Ferguson's most inspired signings.

Was Rooney being manipulated, as Ferguson suggests? He is basically a simple soul and some of the things he said during the stand-off – oh, of course, he never really wanted to leave United – sounded scripted.

The major question is whether he is remotely worth his massive new salary. He was a disaster in the last World Cup, was of little value in the previous one in Germany, which culminated in his being sent off, and, bar a fine display at Wembley against Bulgaria, his form since his return to England this summer has been mediocre.

What a poignant contrast there was, almost the very day Rooney got his mega rise, with Paul Gascoigne, accused of having drugs, hard on the heels of being told in court he could face prison for being four times over the drink-drive limit with another court case to come. Gazza and Rooney have arguably been the two outstanding English talents of the last two decades; one salient difference being that where Gazza excelled in the 1990 World Cup in Italy, Rooney has failed twice.

Unlike Gascoigne, who has been in turmoil for years, Rooney at least comes from a solid family background and, whatever the ups and downs, will doubtless remain solidly resilient. Whether United and Ferguson have got a bargain, however costly, we shall see. ●

Dazzling...Hernandez

GOALS
WE'D LIKE TO SEE AGAIN...

Up and over...Lavezzi (left) fools Milan keeper Christian Abbiati

1 Ezequiel Lavezzi, Napoli v Milan
Having been floored in a tackle, he scoops the ball over the advancing goalkeeper

2 Humberto Mendoza, Atletico Nacional v Real Cartagena
Shades of Brazil's Josimar from the 1986 World Cup with a wonder strike

3 Gareth Bale, Tottenham Hotspur v Internazionale
Unstoppable dribble from the halfway line ends with a low shot into bottom corner

4 Michael Stahl, Koblenz v Hertha Berlin
A dipping shot from 10 yards inside his own half

5 Bastian Schweinsteiger, Bayern Munich v Werder Bremen
A thunderous right-foot shot to decide a German Cup tie

Hammer...Schweinsteiger

AND ONE THAT WENT BEGGING.....

Mohammadou Idrissou, Borussia Monchengladbach v Kaiserslautern
The Cameroon striker missed an open goal from seven yards out with the score at 0-0. Gladbach went on to lose 3-0

Agony...Idrissou

To see clips of these goals, visit www.worldsoccer.com

NUMBERS GAME

502
minutes Chelsea's defence had gone unbreached prior to Blackburn Rovers' Benjani scoring in the game at Ewood Park

2
times in the history of Brest football club that the French outfit have reached the summit of Ligue 1. A 2-0 win over Saint Etienne took them there for the first time since August 1986

14
seconds between Levski Sofia defender Ivo Ivanov coming on as a sub and scoring an own goal against Lille in the Europa League

36
goals in last 37 games for Cristiano Ronaldo at Real Madrid by the middle of November

39
goals in his last 41 games for Lionel Messi at Barcelona

100
goals in Italian football for Zlatan Ibrahimovic after his goal for Milan against Palermo

£119.8m
record annual revenue for Spurs in their latest accounts for the year ending June 2010

£6.6m
loss for Spurs in the same accounts

REPORTS we couldn't make up

Keep off the grass...Gouffran

GRASS REACTION

Bordeaux's 24-year-old winger Yoan Gouffran has been visiting a specialist in a bid to alleviate his allergy...to grass.

"For a footballer, it's embarrassing," said Bordeaux coach Jean Tigana.

NAME ON THE TROPHY

The Swedish FA is investigating claims that the silversmith who made the Swedish league trophy left a secret inscription dedicated to his team.

The late Ingemar Eklund was said to have written "Bajen forever" on the inside of the trophy.

Bajen is the nickname for Stockholm club Hammarby.

DOPEY TEAM

Scientists believe West Germany were secretly doped before they beat Hungary 3-2 in the 1954 World Cup Final. "There are indications that point to the injection of [methamphetamine], not vitamin C as claimed," says Erik Eggers, who led the research.

On a high..Helmut Rahn (arms raised) scores in the 1954 World Cup Final

KEEPER PAYS FOR FAN ATTACK

One of China's leading players has been suspended from the national team after writing an offensive message to fans on a social networking website.

Goalkeeper Wang Dalei was angry at supporters following China's 3-0 loss to Japan at the Asian Games.

"It would be flattery to call you fans. You're just a bunch of dogs," he posted on his microblog. "You bunch of morons are the main reason why Chinese football can't make progress. You throw in stones after a man has fallen into a well."

Heartfelt apology...Wang Dalei

The Chinese FA suspended him for China's next game, against Kyrgyzstan and ordered him to "meditate on his action".

RUMOURS we'd like to believe

Gazzetta dello Sport have it on good authority that Milan director of sport Ariedo Braida has been on a scouting mission in Brazil to observe Cruzeiro's talented 24-year-old full-back Jonathan. The word is that Milan will now make a decision between the latter and Benfica attacking left-back Fabio Coentrao, who is also wanted by Bayern Munich.

Lisbon-based *Diario de Noticias* relate a four-way duel for the services of Genk's up-and-coming Belgo-Moroccan winger Yassine El Ghanassy. The interested parties are Everton, Lyon, Milan and Celtic.

Russian approach...Renato Augusto

Sources in Germany and Russia believe that Zenit are ready to make an offer to Bayer Leverkusen for their playmaker Renato Augusto, whose current deal runs until 2014.

Barcelona daily Sport are sticking to the line that the Camp Nou management are seriously tracking Fiorentina right-back Lorenzo De Silvestri, who made his debut for Italy this autumn.

Nou target...De Silvestri

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Paul Gardner

All praise to the tricksters

IT WAS ABOUT 17.15 on a warm evening in Dortmund that I experienced my all-time most gripping, most emotional World Cup moment. Ronaldo had just scored for Brazil against Ghana and everyone – yes the whole stadium I'm sure – was on its feet applauding this wonderful player, who looked a bit fat but who had just broken Gerd Muller's World Cup goalscoring record.

If I intensely treasured that moment, I soon found out that there were others who didn't. As Ronaldo bore down on goal he had put on a couple of classic football moves, a shimmy and a fake, to get around the goalkeeper. And that didn't go down well with some.

"Why did he have to do that stuff?" I was asked by another – younger, I might add – journalist, who regarded it as reprehensible showing off.

What I saw as an exciting skill, he saw as hot-dogging or show-boating. I was not taken totally aback because during the 1998 finals the world had become aware of Cuauhtemoc Blanco's bunny-hop move, the *cuateminha*, a highly original way of getting the ball past – or over – a tackler's feet. Yet, on television, a former England coach deplored the manoeuvre, and slammed it as "taking the mickey".

In the modern game it seems there is no place for any clever ball trickery. Far from being viewed as something ornamenting the sport, it is seen as a "provocation".

Then, from Brazil of all places, came barely disguised threats of violence against players who dared to do anything fancy. In 2007 the news arrived of Kerlon – a 19-year-old forward with Cruzeiro who was becoming renowned for his "seal dribble" in which he advanced the ball with a carefully and skillfully controlled series of soft headers. While the home crowd roared, his opponents fumed. Worse, they resorted to veiled threats.

"It's a provocation," said Emerson Leao, then coach of Atletico Mineiro. "He may have to be sidelined for several years if he gets kicked in the face." He then quickly added: "I hope that never happens."

When Manchester United's Nani tried a short "seal dribble" against Arsenal in 2008 he avoided serious injury only because he saw Mathieu Flamini's wildly vicious tackle coming. Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger, a champion of *jogo bonito*, accused Nani of "teasing" the Arsenal players.

So, inventive skill is provocation. Or taking the mickey. Or disrespect. Or teasing. Alex Ferguson came much closer to the truth when he dubbed it arrogance, but he said it's something that all the great players must have – a "nice arrogance".

Clever and original

In October, Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, during the derby game against Atletico, turned away from the ball, let it hit his back and roll off to a team-mate. It was clever, it was neat, it was legal and it was original. And therefore it was criticised. Atletico's Alvaro Dominguez called it "silliness", while Jose Antonio Reyes rolled out "provocation" again.

Have we really reached a stage where defenders are so sensitive about what they see as their dignity, but which is more likely their lack of skills, that they feel justified in seeing "provocation" whenever they're faced with a skilled forward, and so feel entitled to respond with physical play?

Maybe we have. Over 35 years ago, the English FA chief Charles Hughes decreed that there were only five "basic fundamental reasons" why goals are scored. All five of them were mistakes by defenders. No credit at all was given to attacking skills. Apparently, if defenders did their job properly, no goals would ever be scored.

That attitude of enshrining defensive play as the key to football and its corollary of playing down the importance – or certainly the effectiveness – of attacking play, has got us where we are today.

Creative...Ronaldo

I'm wondering where the great Stanley Matthews would fit into this? Surely his moves – well, move, singular, really – would be judged provocation today. He left more than one full-back on his backside, and others simply staring at space, as he glided past them. Yet – and this I'm sure of – in those days we didn't fear for Stan's safety; we didn't hear snide references to his possibly getting kicked if he didn't cut it out.

And what of the nutmeg? Is that move still allowed by these defensive arbiters of the game? I suspect not. If one does see it these days, it is likely to end with a crunching body block on the dribbler...and sometimes, but not always, a free-kick.

Indeed, what of any moment of slick ball play? That lovely move of lifting the ball over an opponent's head – the "sombrero" (the English do not have a word for it) – surely that's provocative? Even a back heel is likely to make a defender look silly.

But the thing that makes the defenders, and the apologists for defensive play, look silliest is their refusal to allow that their can be skilled forwards out there who can fool them. According to the "five reasons why goals are scored" that shouldn't happen.

Fortunately, despite the physical risks involved, there are still dribblers out there willing to do unusual things.

After his move against Atletico, Ronaldo commented: "Sometimes you have to be creative." I'd like to broaden that "sometimes", but as an approach to the sport...bravo Ronaldo! ●

"In the modern game it seems there is no place for clever ball trickery...it is seen as a 'provocation'"

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Jonathan Wilson

East European racism has roots in austerity

PERHAPS THE truest thing any football administrator ever said was the response Ted Croker, then the secretary of the Football Association, came up with in 1985 when asked by Britain's then prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, what he was doing to rid society of football's hooligans. The question, he replied, was rather what was she doing to rid football of society's hooligans?

Football, of course, has a role to play in tackling violence within its own stadiums and clubs have a responsibility to govern their fans, but almost invariably when there is a rise in hooliganism – particularly when it is connected to far-right groups – the cause is societal and economic.

That has always been the case. Take the situation of Hungary in the early 1920s, when society became increasingly bourgeois, leading to tension between the new wealth and those who felt they were being left behind. The Budapest district of Ferencvaros has always been a working-class area and it was there that the dissatisfaction was at its strongest.

As the historian Tamas Krausz put it: "Foreign money, ie 'Jewish capital', and 'foreigners' in general, was considered the main obstacle in the way of Hungarian prosperity." Without anything else to cling to, many rallied round the football club, which provided a sense of identity and belonging. Ferencvaros thus became noted for its anti-Semitic fans and the club was one of the main platforms for the Arrow Cross Party, the pro-Nazi party that seized power in 1944.

Racism in English football was at its worst in the Eighties – when bananas were thrown at John Barnes, for instance, and monkey chants were commonplace – as the Thatcherite desire to control inflation led to high unemployment and an increasing gap between rich and poor.

Polish football, similarly, suffered an upsurge in far-right activity amid the economic upheaval that followed entry into the European Union in 2004.

Gathering storm...Karpaty Lviv fans in menacing mood before the Europa League clash with Borussia Dortmund

"A beautiful day was spoiled by barbarians. Fires were lit in a section where families sit"

Pierluigi Collina witnessed hooligan violence at a match in Ukraine

It is no surprise that as the full effects of the post-2007 economic downturn begin to be felt across Europe, neo-Nazism is on the rise again. That is especially true in Ukraine, which has witnessed a number of incidents of hooliganism and far-right activity over the past year.

Pierluigi Collina, who has overseen Ukrainian refereeing since July, witnessed some of the worst of it at a game between Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk and Metalist Kharkiv. "A beautiful day was spoiled by barbarians," he said. "First of all, numerous fires were lit in the section where families sit with their children, then a bottle hit a linesman and left him with blood pouring from his face."

When Volyn Lutsk played at Arsenal Kyiv at the Victor Bannikov Stadium, just 300 metres from the Football Federation of Ukraine headquarters in the capital, away fans unveiled a banner celebrating the Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler, the Fuhrer's personal bodyguard. And in Lviv, Karpaty hooligans clashed with Borussia Dortmund fans after the Germans reacted to having Hitler salutes directed at them – apparently in a misguided gesture of solidarity.

There have been regular outbreaks of racism in Russia as well, most recently the banner raised by Lokomotiv Moscow fans "thanking" West Bromwich Albion for taking the Nigeria forward Peter Odemwingie off their hands; the message accompanied, just in case anybody thought their delight in seeing him go was rooted in his form, with an image of a banana.

Organisers of Russia's World Cup bid mounted a hasty damage limitation exercise, but it is hard to take seriously their claims that racism in Russia is isolated.

With austerity measures in place across Europe, civil unrest is only likely to worsen and football has historically provided a stage for such dissatisfaction. ●

HEROES...

Derby double...Cisse struck twice in the big Greek showdown

CARLOS MARTINS
The midfielder delivered two crosses and two inch-perfect passes to assist in all four Benfica goals in their 4-3 Champions League win against Lyon.

Provider...Martins

DJIBRIL CISSE
The French striker scored two second-half goals in six minutes to help Panathinaikos to a 2-1 win in the Athens derby at home to Olympiakos.

ROAR STRAND
The Norwegian midfielder retired aged 40 and after 21 consecutive seasons with Rosenborg.

MAN UNITED
The club paid £227,000 for World Cup and European Cup winners' medals put up for auction by former player Nobby Stiles.

ARMENIA
The nation of just three million jumped 45 places to a record high of 60th in the FIFA rankings.

& VILLAINS

Beaten...Van Dijk

ROB VAN DIJK
The Feyenoord goalkeeper had to pick the ball out of his net on 10 occasions away to PSV Eindhoven.

VLATKO MARKOVIC
The president of the Croatia football federation sparked protests after he said he would not allow a gay player to be selected for the national team.

MILOS KRASIC
The Juventus winger was banned for two games after diving to win a penalty against Bologna in Serie A.

JEAN-PASCAL MIGNOT
The foul-mouthed Auxerre substitute was sent off in his side's Champions League game against Ajax without even setting foot on the pitch.

Too much to say...Mignot

PATRICK HELMES
Missed two penalties for Bayer Leverkusen – one in regular time and one in the penalty shoot-out – as they were knocked out of the German Cup.

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Pellegrini's return
Former Real Madrid and Villarreal boss Manuel Pellegrini returned to Spanish football as the new coach of ambitious Malaga. More, page 36

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AFRICA
All change
A disappointing World Cup has been followed by the inevitable coaching changes. More, page 50

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HEADLINERS

People in the news...on and off the pitch

Diego Maradona and Sergio Batista

As Argentina's greatest player turns 50, his former team-mate is confirmed as his successor as national coach

ARGENTINA

GIVEN HIS numerous flirtations with death down the years, Diego Maradona turning 50 on October 30 was a milestone that many people thought they would never see.

The most worrying moment came in 2000, when he was taken to hospital in Uruguay suffering from serious heart problems brought on by drug addiction and fast living. On that occasion a priest was called to his bedside to administer the last rites.

Yet reaching 50 was of little significance to his country's greatest-ever player; more important was the loss of his job as Argentina coach.

"This is the saddest birthday of my life and one which I do not wish to celebrate," said Maradona. "The best gift would have been to continue as national team coach. I began mourning the day we were knocked out of the World Cup."

Maradona spent his birthday quietly at his home, in the Buenos Aires suburb of Ezeiza, near the Argentinian FA (AFA) training camp where he spent a lot of the previous year preparing players for international games and the World Cup.

"I know that one day I will be back," he added.

Maradona had originally planned to celebrate his birthday in Naples, where he played in the 1980s and is still worshipped by the Napoli fans. But his continual problems with the Italian tax authorities forced him to change his plans.

Maradona had been dismissed as Argentina coach after the World Cup when he refused to accept AFA chief Julio Grondona's plans to ditch his coaching staff. Maradona later hinted that he might agree to changes to his staff if he could keep his job, but by then it was too late.

A week after his birthday he seemed to have got over some of his melancholy. On his way to China, at the invitation of the Red Cross for a benefit tour, he said he had put his coaching ambitions on hold, claiming: "I now want to spend more time with my family."

A lot of Maradona's problems have been blamed on the people surrounding him, but now that his affairs are managed by his former wife and mother to his two legitimate daughters, Claudia Villafane, at least the money stays in the family.

Interim coach

Shortly after the World Cup, Sergio Batista – a midfielder and team-mate of Maradona's in the 1986 World Cup-winning squad – was appointed interim coach. Batista was previously in charge of the Under-20 side and also coached Argentina's 2008 Olympic gold-medal winners.

Under him, the national team played three friendlies – beating the Republic of Ireland 1-0 away, Spain 4-1 at home, and losing 1-0 in Japan. In those games, Lionel Messi, who failed to fulfil expectations at the World Cup, played more like he does for Barcelona.

Batista also brought back Javier Zanetti and Esteban Cambiasso, who had unexpectedly been left out of the World Cup squad by Maradona, and said he would recall Juan Roman Riquelme – who had resigned from international football following a disagreement with Maradona – as soon as he was fit.

It seemed a forgone conclusion that Batista would be given the job on a permanent basis. Yet Grondona, who originally chose him, went through the motions of doing it democratically. A six-strong committee – including Grondona's son, who is also called Julio – was formed to "discuss" candidates and then inform Grondona...who chose Batista.

The style of Argentina's 32nd national coach is very different to that of Maradona. Batista has a low-key approach and believes the players prefer that. In South Africa, Maradona's image eclipsed that of his players. Batista insists he does not want to get too close to his squad, unlike Maradona, who is still a player at heart and whose approach seemed too friendly at times.

Batista prefers ball-playing midfielders, so there will be no room for the likes of Jonas Gutierrez or Maxi Rodriguez. Unlike Maradona, Batista does not confront the media – he simply tells them his ideas and that's that. He also – again unlike Maradona – listens to team manager Carlos Bilardo.

Players easily understand Batista. He does not drive them crazy with a plethora of instructions or go crazy himself when they win or lose. He prefers a flexible 4-3-3 and gives more importance to ball work than physical training.

Batista will slowly change the national team in 2011. His first list of players will be chosen in February for the planned friendly against England and it is likely to include most of the players who went to the World Cup.

In the summer comes the bigger test of the Copa America on home soil, where they will be under great pressure to win. Major changes, including the introduction of younger players, will have to wait.

Batista intends to form two squads in addition to the seniors, each with their own programme of matches. One will be made up of locally-based players and another of under-25, foreign-based players not in the senior team.

Batista also talks of opening offices in Spain and Italy to not only look at Argentina internationals but also the many promising youngsters who left South America to play junior football in Europe. Finding another Messi is the ultimate hope.

Eric Weil

Next in line...Batista (left) listens in on a Maradona team talk shortly before succeeding him as national coach

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AFA
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Owen Hargreaves
Tendonitis in both knees threatens to end career of United midfielder...

ENGLAND

WILL Owen Hargreaves ever play for Manchester United again? The midfielder was a surprise starter in United's Premier League game against Wolverhampton Wanderers on November 6, but he lasted just five minutes before pulling up with a hamstring injury.

It was Hargreaves' first start for his club in 777 days, having previously played one minute as a substitute in May this year following surgery to cure tendonitis in both his knees.

With midfield options limited by lay-offs to Ryan Giggs and Paul Scholes, United manager Alex Ferguson opted to play Hargreaves against Wolves despite the midfielder having played no reserve-team games in his latest comeback attempt.

Although the injury appeared to be muscular, Ferguson hinted that a wider issue could be at play. "It is possibly because of a lack of match fitness," he said. "Maybe a bit of anxiety at playing his first game had a bit to do with it too."

Medical advances make premature retirement a rare occurrence for modern-day players, but the severity of Hargreaves' condition must now mean that is a strong possibility.

Richard Steadman, the renowned surgeon who has operated on both of Hargreaves' knees – the left in November 2008 and the right in January 2009 – has described the tendonitis afflicting the 29-year-old as the worse case he has seen in 35 years in medicine.

Hargreaves traces the problem back to a broken leg which kept him out of the Bayern Munich side for much of the 2006-07 season. With his leg in plaster, his muscles deteriorated and he failed to build them up sufficiently when returning to action following his £20million move to Old Trafford in summer 2007.

He won the Premier League and Champions League in his first season at United, notably converting a penalty in the Champions League Final shoot-out victory over Chelsea in Moscow. But his contract runs out in the summer and it remains to be seen whether United will offer him a new deal. The club stayed loyal to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer during his struggles with injury, but they may be less generous to Hargreaves in a more austere climate.

England manager Fabio Capello watched from the Old Trafford stands as Hargreaves limped off following his latest setback. He may now never be in a position to award Hargreaves a 43rd cap.

Hargreaves, born in Canada and schooled in German football, took time to win over English fans who were suspicious of his fluent German and transatlantic accent, but he developed into England's most intelligent midfielder of recent times and was the country's best player at the 2006 World Cup.

Sadly, that may prove to have been his finest hour.

Gavin Hamilton

Worrying times...Hargreaves lasted just five minutes of his latest comeback

Seventy and out...Inzaghi celebrates what could be his last European goal

Filippo Inzaghi
...while Italian striker could call it quits following knee injury

ITALY

THE veteran poacher suffered serious knee-ligament damage in Milan's 3-1 victory over Palermo – a result which put the *Rossoneri* top of Serie A – and he will not play again this term.

The 37-year-old recently demonstrated his goalscoring prowess with both of Milan's goals in their 2-2 draw with Real Madrid in the Champions League. That double took his career tally to 70 European goals at club level, but he may not now have another chance to add to the total.

Gavin Hamilton

Harold Mayne-Nicholls
World Cup inspection duty proves costly for Chile federation president

CHILE

THE first victim of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup battle was not one of the nine bids but Harold Mayne-Nicholls, the Chile federation president.

Mayne-Nicholls had steered Chilean football back to a long-awaited level of international respect, partly thanks to the World Cup second-round placing which stemmed from his backing for Argentinian coach Marcelo Bielsa.

However, Chile's most powerful clubs struck back with Union Espanola president Jorge Segovia as a presidential candidate. Backed by the country's big three of Colo Colo, Universidad de Chile and Universidad Catolica, Segovia defeated Mayne-Nicholls 28-22.

As a result, Bielsa resigned immediately in sympathy.

Mayne-Nicholls seems to have paid a heavy price for having been away for much of the previous four months on FIFA duty – first at the World Cup, then as chairman of the FIFA inspection team on its time-consuming global tour, checking out the nine World Cup bidders.

While the cat was away, it seems as though the mice have played.

Keir Radnedge

Sold down the river...while Mayne-Nicholls inspected England's World Cup bid, the top Chilean clubs plotted against him

Danny Jordaan
2010 World Cup chief eyes future at FIFA

SOUTH AFRICA

Political hot seat...Jordaan is ready to take up roles with the African confederation and FIFA

DANNY JORDAAN is on the way back...not that he was ever away, really. It's just that, once the 2010 World Cup had been wrapped up, his high-visibility globe-trotting, media-meeting days – in that context, at least – were over.

Jordaan, 59, had been circling the globe ever since the late 1990s when South Africa – encouraged by FIFA president Sepp Blatter – launched its campaign to host the World Cup.

He "wound down" as a highly qualified member of the FIFA team which checked out the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidders, but now is back on the political ladder.

Jordaan has been nominated by South Africa to become, simultaneously, a member of the executive committees of both the African confederation and, as a CAF representative at FIFA.

Two of Africa's four FIFA slots pop up for re-election in February: those currently held by Nigeria's controversy-mired Amos Adamu and Jacques Anouma, president of the Ivory Coast federation.

One imagines that SAFA president Kirsten Nematandani and Jordaan's old rival Irvin Khoza would be only too happy to see him spin out of their domestic orbit.

But would it stop there? Could Jordaan one day be CAF president? Even the first African president of FIFA?

The plot thickens.

Keir Radnedge

worldmags

Keir Radnedge

FIFA needs a revolution

Vote-rigging crisis has shown world football's governing body is incapable of reforming itself from within

EVENTS AT THE World Cup in South Africa, and the climax to the 2018 and 2022 bidding process, have proved beyond question that FIFA's structure is no longer adequate to govern the worldwide game in the 21st century.

This is not an issue about the pyramid structure with national associations commanding a vote each in congress – that has flaws but, given the balance of numbers regionally, works more effectively and fairly than any possible alternative (of which few have ever been suggested).

Far greater concern must focus on the administrative shape of FIFA and the make up of the executive committee. How to deal with the challenge is one point; who should – or can – deal with it is another.

FIFA was created in 1904. As it was a Eurocentric body, travel and communication restraints led directly to the creation of the South American confederation, the first regional "office" in 1916. Not until 50 years after FIFA's formation did Europe attain its own regional autonomy. Africa, Asia, CONCACAF and Oceania all followed and provide the electoral, representative membership of the executive committee.

The vote-rigging allegations prompted a persistent line of questioning from outsiders, asking why such enormous power of patronage – the gift of the World Cup – should rest with two dozen football administrators who represent the good, the bad and the ugly of international sports politics.

Too close...Sulser (left) and Valcke

Toothless...Holland's Wesley Sneijder appeared to enjoy the World Cup far more than Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson

The essential right

Awarding a World Cup is not merely about staging potential; it's about expanding the game and spreading the gospel – and these are political decisions. Hence the award is the essential right of the executive committee. But how the exco is structured and how FIFA is constructed are different issues.

FIFA first. The 2010 World Cup in South Africa was an extraordinary event. The South African political, governmental, state and sports institutions pulled off a remarkable achievement – which would not have been possible without the weight of resources, personnel and experience with which FIFA commanded, oversaw and drove the project.

Top marks to Jerome Valcke, FIFA's secretary-general for the leadership, focus and discipline he brought to the task. But the overwhelming sensation as the lights went on in Soccer City late on July 11 was that the 2010 World Cup had been about South Africa, Africa and the organisation. It had not been about the game. The quality of the football on view was modest, certainly by comparison with the latter stages of the Champions League. Alex Ferguson may have been a little cruel in comparing World Cup football with a trip to the dentist, but everyone understood the point he was making.

FIFA and president Sepp Blatter, belatedly, have even acknowledged it by creating Task Force 2014 to consider how to improve the entertainment factor, particularly in the group stage. Personally, more rest days – especially between groups and the second round – and no new match ball would be

Read more from Keir Radnedge at worldsoccer.com

Changing places...(from left) Mong-joon, Blatter and Bin Hammam

helpful, but the fundamental change necessary to raise the quality is the one which FIFA will not go near: cutting back the numbers of teams.

The world federation has become such a commercially powerful administrative machine that it demands a rebalancing of its functions. It should be split in two. One half of FIFA should concentrate on football the game (quality, quantity, World Cup shop window, conditions, technical aides); the other half should be given honest status as a tournament organisation corporation (including marketing, TV, etc).

While its significant income comes from the World Cup, FIFA runs 10 substantive international tournaments, excluding the Olympics event. Politically driven global expansion means that the vast majority go to countries badly in need of a powerful administrative helping hand. So appreciate it, acknowledge it...and respond to it.

The trouble with South Africa 2010 was that organisational priorities were placed far ahead of footballing needs. This is dangerous financially for FIFA. If the quality of the product falls then so will the price which sponsors and television are prepared to pay.

That would affect FIFA's ability to support the development programmes (which give the president such enormous personal clout), to take tournaments to new territories and maybe even the five-star luxury lifestyle of the exco membership.

Ah yes, the executive committee. Is this really a representative governing body fit for purpose in the 21st century?

If there are former players on the committee – such as Michel Platini and Franz Beckenbauer – it is only by happy coincidence. The governing body of world football should, logically, include representatives of the players, of the referees, of the leagues.

Once, long ago, in an interview during a relaxed era when there was no need for reflex defence of the status quo, Blatter agreed that the exco needed to be far more representative of the men and women who make the game tick. He also acknowledged that pushing the exco into reinventing itself would demand greater political skill and powers of persuasion than even he possesses.

World sport needs an ethics commission which is not only independent by name but is seen to be independent

Disgraced disrepute

Whatever the outcome of the ethics commission verdict over the vote-rigging allegations, the sad, sorry saga has left the FIFA's executive committee in a state of disgraced disrepute throughout the sporting world.

That should concern both the game and those members within the exco whose conduct and commitment to the development of football is as honest as the conduct of some of their colleagues is questionable.

While on that theme, it is clearly nonsensical that issues of veracity should go before an ethics commission of FIFA's own making. World sport needs an ethics commission which is not only independent by name but is seen to be independent: an offshoot of neither FIFA or of the IOC, but of the Court of Arbitration for Sport which has been such a resounding success.

With all due respect to chairman Claudio Sulser, seeing him sitting at the right hand of Valcke after his initial ethics committee meeting was not a reassuring sign of independence.

So much then for two points out of three: split FIFA in two and restructure the executive committee while, as an aside, refer all ethics issues to an outside, truly independent monitoring authority.

Now, the ticklish final point: who is to achieve all this? Does the visionary exist, somewhere out there in the world game, to inspire his (or her) colleagues to undertake the root-and-branch reconstruction demanded for the sake of the reputation of world football, of FIFA and of the World Cup?

Blatter will run for re-election for a fourth term, next year. As Mr Continuity – the man who added new rooms, wings, battlements and turrets to Joao Havelange's edifice – he is unlikely to lead a revolutionary insurrection. So who else then?

Chung Mong-joon and Mohamed Bin Hammam both talked earlier this past year about running for the presidency. Both then made public declarations of a change of heart, realising that such reckless talk risked serious damage to the World Cup bids of their respective home nations of South Korea and Qatar.

This would not, of course, preclude either of them from having a change of heart yet again once December 2 is history.

The political game that is now under way – Chung needs Bin Hammam's support to fight off a January challenge from Prince Ali of Jordan to his AFC vice-presidential status – suggests that the Qatari is the likeliest contender though his power base in global terms is comparatively small.

He could easily quote the vote-rigging allegations and the double-World Cup-award chaos as revisionist reasons for wishing to bring a new broom to the corridors of power in Zurich.

Speculation goes anywhere after that, of course. If Blatter were under pressure, how would Platini react? The Frenchman had conceded that a run for FIFA president is no longer out of the question one day in the future, though he would not run against Blatter, his FIFA mentor.

Structure... governance... personal power. The question is no longer why, but when? And who? And how soon?

D-Day in Zurich

The hosts of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups will be announced on December 2 at FIFA House after a fierce bidding campaign dogged by allegations of bribery and collusion

2018

ENGLAND

HOLLAND/BELGIUM

RUSSIA

SPAIN/PORTUGAL

FOLLOWING THE World Cup bidding race has been akin to following the Derby. In terms of 2018, England and Russia have been neck and neck as they turn into the home stretch, with both glancing over their shoulders at Spain/Portugal advancing rapidly on the outside. Meanwhile, the prospect of Holland/Belgium accelerating through the middle looks a long, outside bet.

As for 2022, the United States and Qatar have staked claims to forge in front while Australia has some ground to make up, and Japan and South Korea need a gap to open up in the tactical judgment of the leading bunch.

Judging the outcome has never been more difficult, with the results so close they might even rest on the presence or absence among the executive committee in Zurich on December 2 of Oceania president Reynald Temarii and Nigeria's Amos Adamu, depending on how the ethics commission's verdict falls.

The *Sunday Times* investigation may prove valuable for FIFA in the long term, but in the short term it has served only to remind the more nervous exco member that a vote for England will means seven years of concern about fake sheikhs and the like.

No wonder bid chief executive Andy Anson

2022

JAPAN

AUSTRALIA

QATAR

SOUTH KOREA

USA

approached the BBC in concern at the programme being prepared by *Panorama*. A previous *Panorama* investigation caused a stir among the International Olympic Committee – and that was 15 months before London won the day in Singapore to host the 2012 Games, not a matter of four days as this instance promises.

But far, far more important than the media sideshow is the overall FIFA power game. The World Cup bid show is just one battleground – albeit an important and valuable one – in the long-term war over the Sepp Blatter succession. Various characters are adjusting positions within their own regional power bases and discussing alliances with, in some cases, the most unlikely bedfellows.

Knowing how it works may make depressing viewing for Harold Mayne-Nicholls. He may feel he lost the presidency of the Chilean federation because he was away too much on FIFA duty compiling inspection reports which confirmed what everyone knew – that all the candidates could host a World Cup – and which will probably matter little when it comes to the vote.

FIFA exco members vote with a balance of concerns. Primarily, the World Cup venue is crucial for FIFA finances and the development of the game – this means that a "safe" host

(such as England) can be balanced against a political gamble (such as Qatar). Then most of the voters have a regional interest (Europe, Asia/Oceania, North/Central America), while eight of them (but not Australia) have national interests (England's Geoff Thompson, Belgium's Michel D'Hooghe, Russia's Vitaly Mutko, Spain's Angel Maria Villar, Japan's Junji Ogura, Qatar's Mohamed Bin Hammam, South Korea's Chung Mong-joon and the United States' Chuck Blazer)...and all of them, naturally and undeniably and properly, have personal interests.

Australia's chief executive Ben Buckley insists he is not concerned at the lack of a presence on the exco, though he may have worries at what some of the rest of his "Asian family" are up to in the whispering gallery.

Open questions concern the voting intentions of FIFA president Blatter and UEFA president Michel Platini, while CONCACAF president Jack Warner has every obvious and singular reason for voting 2022 to the USA.

Blatter, of course, has been polite and encouraging to everyone. One assumes he wants a safe 2018 venue for the sake of the financial legacy of his presidency and may, as a showman, quite fancy sending 2022 to Qatar when he will no longer be around to pick up the bouquets or brickbats. But, in the meantime, he could be lauded for going boldy where world sport has never gone before.

Also, a Qatar World Cup could head off a possible challenge next year to his presidency from Bin Hammam.

Platini has been just as careful not to be drawn. His priority was to ensure 2018 comes to Europe and avoid the damaging split within the "European family" engendered over the messy Germany/England rivalry in the 2006 bidding. Aside from the England-Russia verbals – which have been little more than handbags of tension – he has succeeded.

The popular view about Platini is that he is a critic of the English game, but this is far, far from the truth. He dislikes the voracious commercial appetite of the Premier League and of a sports/company structure which has led to the debt mountain – and in that he is not alone. But Platini loves the great old English football traditions. He can recall sitting down in front of the television as a boy to drink in the atmosphere and aura of the FA Cup Final – the Saturday sunshine, the presentational walk up to the Royal Box. One of his few regrets from his playing days was that he never got to play at Wembley when he was at his zenith. If he had his Utopian, commercial-free way he would scrap the Champions League and revert to a straight, FA Cup-style, direct knockout.

More practically, he may be nervous of condemning FIFA to the sort of will-they-won't-they concerns which have plagued the Euro 2012 co-hosting preparations of Ukraine and Poland.

Balanced interests

The 2018 bids all have varying strengths and weaknesses when set against a FIFA standard, which is about balanced interests. England, as even Blatter has said, could host the World Cup tomorrow. Everything is in place to be neatly accomplished, with a party atmosphere and a record revenue return for the world game, but there is no tangible domestic legacy. England is soccer-satiated.

Holland/Belgium got off to a slow start when Johan Cruyff played his predictably tedious game of whether to be involved and Ruud Gullit stepped into the up-front breach magnificently. Still, a lot of work on venues would be needed – and anyone who has driven their roads would worry that a World Cup would bring travel gridlock.

Russia have had everything to do in raising their status as a "new" country and as a first-time host against a context of size. But, perhaps appreciating the challenge, they have worked intensely in all spheres of the world game – including politically – to promote their cause. Germany, for example, is considered a powerful ally.

No one doubts that when prime minister Vladimir Putin sets his mind on a target, failure would not exactly assist the career advancement plans of his staff. There is a huge amount at stake for the Russians which, perhaps, makes them narrow favourites.

Reviewing 2022 is to step into the complex world of both Asian and sports politics.

Qatar has next to nothing to show the world but is probably richer – thanks to oil and natural gas – than all its rivals put together. It has put its ingenuity into temperature-cooling technology and hopes that the lure of taking the World Cup to the Middle East will outweigh the concerns that it would be the smallest host ever and is not in the heart of the most profitable market for FIFA's sponsors. Budweiser, for example, would not expect to generate a lot of business.

Showpiece...Fabio Capello (centre) joins FIFA's inspectors at Wembley

> "Blatter may, as a showman, quite fancy sending 2022 to Qatar...and be lauded for going boldy where world sport has never gone before"

Franz Beckenbauer has spoken up for Australia – a bid consultant is Fedor Radmann, who worked assiduously behind the scenes at his old friend's behest for Germany 2006 – and federation chairman Frank Lowy has put enormous effort into the project. Eventually even the domestic sports scene came on board. No one doubts the country's passion for sport and organisational capacity; whether they can build enough alliances to win enough votes is another issue entirely.

Japan and South Korea are both hindered by the perception of having been recent World Cup hosts. Japan promise all sorts of unique technological magic to take games' broadcasts "as live" in hologrammatic form to fan festivals worldwide, but the Koreans have been held back by domestic political concerns that bidding priority has had to go to Pyeongchang's Winter Olympic campaign.

The United States is the big, looming outsider. The Americans have brought an all-star cast of the great and the good on board – largely, it seems, to impress the domestic audience. But having Bill Clinton take his charisma to the final round of presentations can be a plus, underlining the bid's political and commercial clout.

Above all, the Americans may hope the Asian vote splits conveniently so US Soccer's highly regarded president, Sunil Gulati, can be first across the line.

It is too soon to suggest Russia and the United States will be the prize guys. But to see their old rivalry evolve into super powers on the World Cup stage would be intriguing to say the least.

Do not expect for one moment however, that the power games will cease with Blatter's envelope-opening antics on December 2. ●

Pedal power...Cruyff (second left) and Gullit (second right) put their high profile presence behind the Holland/Belgium bid

Shadow of despair...England bid leader and FA chairman Lord Triesman was forced to resign over injudicious comments, leaked to the *Mail on Sunday*, alleging Spanish and Russian collusion

Double trouble

The joint bidding process for both tournaments has caused no end of problems

IT WAS, APPARENTLY, such a simple sentence. The date was December 20, 2008, the statement: "At its meeting in Tokyo on 19 and 20 December, the executive committee confirmed that FIFA will open a simultaneous bidding process for two World Cup tournaments."

Thus 27 words triggered world football's countdown towards high-cost political chaos. Twice over. High cost in financial terms, since all the start-to-finish bids have averaged a spend of around £50million, and high cost in political terms since the political fallout has shredded FIFA's reputation.

"It seemed a good idea at the time," said president Sepp Blatter a matter of weeks ago as he surveyed the public relations wreckage.

> "FIFA decided to be greedy and give itself the opportunity of a double and early pay day"

Secretary-general Jerome Valcke had long been on the record, from his experience in trying to drive the 2010 World Cup project, that host nations needed more than the allotted six years to prepare. FIFA, looking predominantly from a marketing perspective, decided to be greedy and not only give the 2018 and 2022 hosts much more time but give itself the opportunity of a double – and early – pay day.

The vote for the 2018 and 2022 hosts will, indeed, go ahead among the executive committee in Zurich on the afternoon of December 2, but the fallout in terms of scapegoat-hunting will not stop there.

Still, that is an issue for another day, another month, another year even. The immediate focus is on the unknown territory of how 13 countries representing 11 bids will be narrowed down to 11 from nine – and which two will be left standing, and partying, in the early Swiss hours of December 3.

FIFA decided in October 2007 to scrap rotation which, in any case, had been introduced as a vehicle to ensure the World Cup went to South Africa in 2010 and, as an aside, to Brazil in 2014. That was apparently

good news for England, which was eager to be in the mix as soon as a European bid was allowed.

The then prime minister Gordon Brown jumped in, saying: "The nation which gave football to the world deserves to have the greatest tournament back on these shores. With the Olympics in 2012, possibly the Commonwealth Games in 2014, the rugby World Cup in 2015 and the cricket World Cup in 2019, a football World Cup in 2018 would crown what I believe can be the greatest decade ever for British sport.

"If the FA decides to go ahead and bid for the tournament it knows it will have the full support of the government, and we will make it our mission to persuade other countries to back us in bringing the World Cup back to England."

Already the opposition was lining up. Intimations of interest had come from likely European candidates such as Russia, Spain and the Holland/Belgium/Luxembourg joint bid, plus from further afield China, Australia, Mexico and the United States.

> **The nation which gave football to the world deserves to have the greatest tournament back on these shores**
>
> *Former UK prime minister Gordon Brown*

Powerful...Villar

Then, on that fateful December day in 2008, came the double-jeopardy surprise. Subsequently almost all the initial bidders expressed a protective interest in both tournaments – that meant England, Holland/Belgium (Luxembourg dropped out), Russia, Spain/Portugal, CONCACAF's Mexico and the United States, plus the Asian confederation's Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Qatar and South Korea.

The first formal deadline was May 14 this year when protocol took priority as the confirmed bidders presented their candidacy books to Blatter in front of the world's media. Indonesia and Mexico were absent, so then there were nine.

Call of support

England's delegation was led by FA and bid chairman Lord David Triesman supported, most notably, by former England captain David Beckham. New prime minister David Cameron had even put in a phone call of support for the bid to Blatter the previous evening.

England's delegation came and went. Within days Triesman had gone altogether. He had been recorded and reported by the *Mail on Sunday* telling former aide Melissa Jacobs that Spain could drop its bid to host the 2018 finals if rival bidder Russia helped bribe referees in South Africa. Reportedly he suggested that votes gathered by Spanish supporters on the FIFA executive would switch to Russia.

His comments were toxic since Spain's bid leader was Angel Maria Villar, who is not only a FIFA vice-president but also president of the Spanish federation and chairman of the world federation's referees committee – and therefore a power within FIFA.

Triesman resigned, FIFA vice-president Geoff Thompson took over a role he should probably have held in the first place and the FA apologised to Spain, to Russia and to FIFA. Ethics commission chairman Claudio Sulser inquired into the incident and dismissed it as irrelevant.

All the bids sent teams to FIFA congress on the eve of the World Cup finals to present to and lobby among the delegates. That was the embarrassingly public stage onto which Australia was dragooned by the Asian confederation and FIFA into withdrawing its interest in 2018 and told to stick to 2022.

It was a good day's work for Michel Platini and UEFA's president was closer than ever to his main goal of securing the 2018 finals for Europe. Only the United States remained to be convinced and that was surely only a matter of time.

Lobbying during the finals was formally prohibited apart from all the bidders being allowed one party. England and Russia were now emerging as the most high-profile European rivals. England sent Princes William and Harry, along with Beckham, to supply some class, while Russia sent first deputy prime minister Igor Shuvalov to represent power and Roman Abramovich to represent limitless funds.

When English referee Howard Webb then blew the final whistle in Soccer City to declare Spain world champions on July 11 he also blew the starting whistle on the campaign season.

FIFA sent a six-man inspection team to check out all nine bids. The team included South African World Cup specialist Danny Jordaan and was led by Chilean federation president Harold Mayne-Nicholls. The party was completed by Jurgen Muller, FIFA's head of event management, FIFA Marketing's David Fowler, World Cup co-ordinator Julio Avellar and media officer Wolfgang Eichler.

They started without Jordaan in Tokyo – where the original doubling-up decision had been taken – amid confusion over a Chinese statement of intent to consider bidding for 2026. The Japanese then followed up the inspection team's visit by replacing their own bid leader, Motoaki Inukai, with FIFA exco veteran Junji Ogura.

The remaining inspection tours proceeded smoothly enough. The only occasions on which the veneer of good manners slipped a little were when Mayne-Nicholls cautioned the Russians about the enormous amount of work needed were they to win the vote, then noted that the Americans were coming up short on international legacy and also suggested that Qatar – which sprang Zinedine Zidane on the FIFA team as a surprise bid ambassador – might be too small to host the world.

After that it was downhill all the way.

Blatter was glad-handed by prime minister Cameron at No10 Downing Street on a flying visit to London before the United States defined the certainty of a European World Cup in 2018 by announcing it would focus its own interest solely on 2022.

Within days the *Sunday Times* published its allegations of potential vote-rigging...and all the tentative predictions of who might vote for whom and why, and in which round of the secret ballot, had been cast to the four FIFA winds. ●

Shooting the messenger

Blatter attacks *Sunday Times* entrapment but allegations have damaged FIFA

EVEN THE SELF-SECURE Swiss have been embarrassed enough by the vote-rigging allegations to consider a rapid change to close a legal loophole by which directors and officials of locally-based international sports organisations are exempt from criminal action concerning alleged corruption and bribery in office.

Parliamentarians were quick to raise concerns over a lack of legal supervision for the likes of FIFA, UEFA and the International Olympic Committee that had come to light following the *Sunday Times* revelations about exco members Amos Adamu from Nigeria and Oceania president Reynald Temarii.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter was reported by the Zurich newspaper *Tages-Anzeiger* as fully in favour of a law change.

Yet he also called the move by the *Sunday Times* "entrapment" and criticised its methods. "Fair play shouldn't be just on the pitch...why would an English newspaper do that?" he asked.

Blatter's critical aside had been buttressed by the wounded complaint of Asian confederation president Mohamed Bin Hammam that the *Sunday Times* had been unethical.

All this, suggested another article in *Tages-Anzeiger*, may not have been quite such welcome reading in the "House of Football". This article – under the headline *"Sepp Blatter sollte den Journalisten danken"* (Sepp Blatter would like to thank the journalists) – was written by Res Strehle, one of Switzerland's senior journalists and an editorial director.

He discussed the fallout from the manner in which *Sunday Times* men had pretended to be American business representatives to obtain recordings in which Adamu and Temarii appeared to offer to sell their votes in exchange for financial support for personal domestic sports projects.

Strehle's article went on to explain the variation in privacy laws from country to country. He assessed Swiss law as sustaining that undercover pretence was legally permissible when there were no other apparent means of serving the public interest.

Shaky walls...the *Sunday Times* revelations rocked FIFA's headquarters in Zurich

Strehle pointed out that tales of possible corruption had circled around FIFA for years – how Germany won the 2006 vote, for example – without anyone having ever been able to come up with proof.

Pitches in Nigeria

Adamu, president of the West African Football Union, had told reporters he wanted £500,000 to build pitches in Nigeria and had suggested that the money be paid to him directly for endorsing the US bid – the real US bid was not involved in any way, of course.

Asked whether the money for a "private project" would have an effect on the way he voted, he replied: "Obviously, it will have an effect. Of course it will. Because certainly if you are to invest in that, that means you also want the vote."

Temarii was alleged to have asked for money to finance a sports academy.

The two were submitted for investigation by the FIFA ethics commission – headed up by former Switzerland international Claudio Sulser and which provisionally suspended them – as were allegations of collusion over voting between Spain/Portugal and Qatar.

All denied the claims ahead of the verdict of the ethics commission, who had also applied provisional suspensions to former exco members Slim Aloulou, Amadou Diakite, Ahongalu Fusimalohi and Ismael Bhamjee. Blatter described it as "a sad day for football".

"Zen-Ruffinen, filmed by *Sunday Times* reporters posing as lobbyists, suggested that one FIFA exco member was 'the biggest gangster you will find on earth'"

A *Sunday Times* follow-up named a key informant in its enquiries as Michel Zen-Ruffinen, the former FIFA general secretary. Zen-Ruffinen was filmed by reporters, again posing as lobbyists, and advised them on what it would take to win the backing of some of the FIFA exco members. He suggested some could be influenced by money, another by "ladies", while another was "the biggest gangster you will find on earth".

Zen-Ruffinen had provided a toxic dossier of ammunition for a cabal of 11 mainly European, anti-Blatter plotters within the executive committee in early 2002. However, the subsequent Seoul congress saw Blatter rout the opposition and kick Zen-Ruffinen out of not only FIFA but, in effect, the world football family. Now described as a "consultant", Zen-Ruffinen's role never came within Sulser's investigatory remit.

Nor was Sulser ever called on to consider a minor and ill-considered spat between England and Russia over reported comments about the London crime rate by Alexei Sorokin, the Russian bid chief executive. Sorokin claimed his words had been misinterpreted and taken out of context. ●

The last hours and minutes...and seconds

THE FIVE BIDDING NATIONS for the 2022 World Cup – Australia, South Korea, Qatar, the United States and Japan – will all make final candidacy presentations on the afternoon of December 1, in that order. The four European contenders – Holland/Belgium, Spain/Portugal, England and Russia – will state their cases on the morning of December 2.

Charisma...Putin

Therefore Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin and his team, which is expected to include Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, will be last to address the executive committee before voting takes place on both the 2018 and 2022 World Cup hostings.

Russian bid CEO Alexei Sorokin has insisted all along that he considers Putin's status and charisma can work as successfully with FIFA as it did with the International Olympic Committee when Sochi, surprisingly, won the right to host the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Each bid has a maximum of 30 minutes to state its case, with no more than five people involved. England take to the stage immediately before the Russians and expect to have Prince William, prime minister David Cameron and David Beckham in the presentational quintet.

In the 2022 process, former president Bill Clinton will lead the US in his role as honorary chairman of their bid board.

FIFA's exco members will have, for reference, the inspection reports put together by former Chilean federation president Harold Mayne-Nicholls and his six-man survey group.

The 2018 vote will take place first, then the 2022 one. The vote will be by secret ballot and all eligible exco members – including all nation-interested members and president Sepp Blatter – can vote in both ballots. The winners must obtain an absolute majority (13 votes) after however many rounds of voting are needed – with the bid that receives the fewest votes dropping out in sequence.

Then the two sealed envelopes with the results will be handed by an election auditor from KPMG to Blatter. He will take them, under police escort, to the Zurich Messe complex for the formal openings in front of the gathered media and the world's TV.

Thus exco members will know the two finalists in the 2018 ballot, but will not be told the winner before they vote on 2022.

ENGLAND 2018

STADIA

Arsenal (60,355), Bristol City (prov 44,000), Leeds United (39,460), Liverpool (new 60,000), London Olympic (prov 80,000), Manchester City (47,726), Manchester United (75,957), Milton Keynes (prov 46,000), Newcastle United (52,387), Nottingham Forest (prov 45,000), Sheffield Wednesday (39,812), Sunderland (49,000), Tottenham Hotspur (prov 63,000), Wembley (90,000)

STRENGTH

High-grade stadia in place plus all supporting infrastructure and technology, compact travel options, record commercial/revenue projections

WEAKNESS

Nothing significantly further possible in terms of domestic development

VOTING HOPES

Africa, CONCACAF, some Europe

RUSSIA 2018

STADIA

Kaliningrad (prov 45,015), Kazan (45,015), Krasnodar (prov 50,015), Moscow Dynamo (44,920),Moscow Luzhniki (89,318), Moscow Region (44,257), Moscow Spartak (46,990), Nizhny Novgorod (prov 44,899), Rostov (prov 43,702), Samara (prov 44,918), Saransk (prov 45,015), Sochi (47,659), St Petersburg (new 69,501), Volgograd (prov 45,015), Yaroslavl (prov 44,042)

STRENGTH

New frontier for FIFA, powerful political promises in every sector (security, infrastructure, etc)

WEAKNESS

Distances even with a venues-cluster proposal, amount of construction work needed not only on venues but supporting national infrastructure

VOTING HOPES

Africa, Asia, South America, some Europe

HOLLAND/BELGIUM 2018

STADIA

Amsterdam ArenA (prov 65,000), Amsterdam Olympisch (prov 44,000), Antwerp (new 45,000), Bruges (prov 40,000), Brussels (new prov 80,000), Charleroi (new), Enschede (prov 44,000), Genk (prov 45,000), Ghent (prov 40,000), Heerenveen (prov 44,000), Liege (new), Rotterdam De Kuip (51,577), Rotterdam Nieuwe Kuip (new 82,800), PSV (new 45,000)

STRENGTH

All essential infrastucture, compact travel, new frontier in terms of pragmatic co-hosting

WEAKNESS

FIFA's distaste for co-hosting when high-grade single-country options are on the table

VOTING HOPES

Africa, some Europe

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SPAIN/PORTUGAL 2018

STADIA

Alicante (30,000), Atletico Madrid (prov 73,000), Barcelona Camp Nou (100,000), Barcelona Espanyol (55,926), Benfica (65,647), Bilbao (prov 53,000), Gijon (prov 40,000), La Coruna (prov 45,000), Malaga (prov 45,000), Porto (50,399), Murcia (prov 41,000), Real Madrid (80,354), San Sebastian (prov 43,650), Sporting Lisbon (50,076), Santander (prov 45,000), Valencia (prov 75,000)

STRENGTH

Passion for football, Portugal organisational legacy from 2004

WEAKNESS

Spain's need to partner with Portugal, poor economic outlook, minimal Catalan support

VOTING HOPES

South and central America, Middle East, some Europe

SOUTH KOREA 2022

STADIA

Busan (prov 60,000), Cheonan (prov 45,000), Daegu (prov 81,422), Daejeon (40,535), Goyang (41,311), Gwangju (40,245), Incheon Asiad (new 70,000), Incheon Munhak (50,500), Jeju (prov 43,657), Jeonju (43,389), Seoul Jamsil (69,950), Seoul WC (prov 83,000), Suwon (43,959), Ulsan (44,102)

STRENGTH

Organisational capacity from 2002, state-of-the-art technological support

WEAKNESS

Co-hosted as recently as 2002 (with Japan), campaigning restricted because of complication from PyeongChang's bid to host the 2018 Winter Olympics

VOTING HOPES

Some Asia, some Africa, some Europe

QATAR 2022

STADIA

Al Khawr (prov 45,300), Al Rayyan (prov 44,740), Al Wakrah (prov 45,120), Asha-Shamal (new 45,300), Doha Al Gharafa (prov 40,000), Doha Education City (new 45,000), Doha Khalifa (prov 70,000), Doha Port (new 45,000), Doha Sports City (new 47,500), Doha University (new 43,500), Umm Salal (new 45,000)

STRENGTH

Limitless finance, taking the World Cup into the Middle East for the first time

WEAKNESS

Smallest-ever World Cup host for biggest-ever finals, modest regional commercial potential, almost all building needed

VOTING HOPES

Africa, South America, some Asia, some Europe

AUSTRALIA 2022

STADIA

Adelaide Oval (33,597), Blacktown (new 41,000), Canberra (new 40,000), Carrara (prov 40,000), Brisbane Lang Park (52,500), Geelong (35,000), Melbourne (100,000), Newcastle (prov 42,000), Perth (prov 45,000), Queensland Willows (prov 40,000), Sydney Football Stadium (45,500), Sydney Stadium Australia (83,500)

STRENGTH

National passion for sport, organisational capacity (as per Sydney 2000), new frontier into Oceania, international outreach efforts

WEAKNESS

Having to work the political field from halfway across the world, restricted regional commercial market

VOTING HOPES

Europe, Africa

JAPAN 2022

STADIA

Fukuroi (50,889), Kashima (40,728), Kobe (45,000), Niigata (42,300), Oita (40,000), Osaka Nagai (50,000), Osaka Umeda (prov 80,000), Saitama (63,700), Sapporo (41,484), Tokyo Ajinomoto (49,970), Tokyo National (50,339), Tokyo Toyota (45,000), Yokohama (72,327)

STRENGTH

Organisational capacity from 2002, state-of-the-art infrastructure and technological support, 3D proposal for super-wrap-around broadcasting in 400 worldwide fan fests

WEAKNESS

Co-hosted as recently as 2002 (with South Korea), modest campaigning style, commercial market, domestic sport expansion

VOTING HOPES

Some South America, some Asia, some Europe

UNITED STATES 2022

STADIA

Atlanta (71,228), Baltimore (71,008), Boston Foxborough (73,393), Dallas Arlington (91,600), Dallas Cotton Bowl (92,100), Denver (75,165), Houston (76,000), Indianapolis (66,500), Kansas City (75,364), Los Angeles Coliseum (93,607), Miami Gardens (80,240), Nashville (69,143), New York New Meadowlands (82,566), Pasadena Rose Bowl (94,542), Philadelphia (69,111), Phoenix (71,362), San Diego (67,700), Seattle Husky (72,500), Seattle Qwest (68,065), Tampa (73,393), Washington Landover (91,704)

STRENGTH

Everything in place, commercial potential

WEAKNESS

Distances, hosted as recently as 1994

VOTING HOPES

Europe, South America, some Africa

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Members of the FIFA

The 24 men who will decide the hosts of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups

Sepp Blatter
Switzerland
FIFA president
Exco member since 1998
Born 10.03.36
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Julio Grondona
Argentina
Senior FIFA vice-president
Exco member since 1988
Born 18.09.31
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Spain/Portugal (probable)
2002: unknown

Issa Hayatou
Cameroon
FIFA vice-president (Africa)
Exco member since 1990
Born 09.08.46
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Chung Mong-joon
South Korea
FIFA vice-president (Asia)
Exco member since 1994
Born 17.10.51
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: South Korea

Geoff Thompson
England
FIFA vice-president (home nations)
Exco member since 2007
Born 23.08.45
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: England
2022: unknown

Michel D'Hooghe
Belgium
Exco member (UEFA)
Exco member since 1988
Born 08.12.45
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Holland/Belgium
2022: unknown

Ricardo Teixeira
Brazil
Exco member (South America)
Exco member since 1994
Born 20.06.47
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Spain/Portugal (probable)
2022: unknown

Mohamed Bin Hammam
Qatar
Exco member (Asia)
Exco member since 1996
Born 08.05.49
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: Qatar

Junji Ogura
Japan
Exco member (Asia)
Exco member since 2002
Born 14.08.38
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: Japan

Amos Adamu *
Nigeria
Exco member (Africa)
Exco member since 2006
Born 31.12.52
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Marios Leftkaritis
Cyprus
Exco member (UEFA)
Exco member since 2007
Born 28.11.46
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Jacques Anouma
Ivory Coast
Exco member (Africa)
Exco member since 2007
Born 11.12.51
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

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executive committee

Jack Warner
Trinidad & Tobago
FIFA vice-president (CONCACAF)
Exco member since 1983
Born 21.01.43
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: USA

Angel Maria Villar
Spain
FIFA vice-president (Europe)
Exco member since 1998
Born 21.01.50
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Spain/Portugal
2022: unknown

Michel Platini
France
FIFA vice-president (Europe)
Exco member since 2002
Born 21.06.55
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Reynald Temarii*
France/Tahiti
FIFA vice-president (Oceania)
Exco member since 2004
Born 02.07.67
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: Australia

Senes Erzik
Turkey
Exco member (Europe)
Exco member since 1996
Born 18.09.42
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Chuck Blazer
United States
Exco member (CONCACAF)
Exco member since 1996
Born 26.04.45
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: USA

Worawi Makudi
Thailand
Exco member (Asia)
Exco member since 1997
Born 29.11.51
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Nicolas Leoz
Paraguay
Exco member (CONMEBOL)
Exco member since 1998
Born 10.09.28
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Spain/Portugal (probable)
2022: unknown

Franz Beckenbauer
Germany
Exco member (Europe)
Exco member since 2007
Born 11.09.45
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Russia (probable)
2022: Australia (probable)

Rafael Salgeuro
Guatemala
Exco member (CONCACAF)
Exco member since 2007
Born 03.12.46
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Hany Abo Rida
Egypt
Exco member (Africa)
Exco member since 2007
Born 14.08.53
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: unknown
2022: unknown

Vitaly Mutko
Russia
Exco member (UEFA)
Exco member since 2007
Born 08.12.58
Voting intention World Cup bids
2018: Russia
2022: unknown

*currently suspended pending investigation by ethics committee following *Sunday Times* investigation

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Winter of discontent?

Italian woes continue at home and abroad

ITALY

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

ARE WE HEADED for another Italian winter of discontent? The question is prompted not so much by the latest bout of Antonio Cassano intemperance but by the rather more serious matter of consistently poor Italian results in European competitions.

Three 3-1 defeats in the first week of November highlighted the problem.

Reigning European champions Internazionale were run over by Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League just 48 hours before a Europa League night which saw Palermo beaten away by CSKA Moscow and Napoli lose away to Liverpool.

Just to round off a thoroughly miserable week, both Juventus and Sampdoria were held to 0-0 home draws by Salzburg and Metalist Kharkiv respectively in their Europa League ties.

By the end of that first November week, Italian clubs had played 28 European cup games this season, winning seven, drawing 12 and losing nine. In terms of the infamous UEFA co-efficient which determines national rankings, Italy would seem to be on a very slippery slope. Not only have German clubs overtaken them in the five-year overall ranking to move into third behind England and Spain, but Italian clubs are now being pressed hard to hold onto fourth place ahead of a fast-encroaching France.

Other earlier European results had already sounded the alarm. Milan were clearly overwhelmed in a 2-0 away defeat by Real Madrid, Roma were embarrassed by a 3-1 home loss to Basle, Palermo went down 3-0 at home to CSKA Moscow and Sampdoria lost 2-1 away to Metalist, while Juventus have yet to win a game in Europe this season.

All in all, the days when Italian clubs swept all before them seem long since gone. In a season when the national team has looked very much like a "work in progress" – especially in an away 0-0 draw to Northern Ireland – another dent has been struck in the prestige of the national game.

Or so it would seem. Realists would, however, point out that at this same stage last year, Inter looked to be on their way out of the Champions League, so all is still possible.

Given too that UEFA's disciplinary board, as expected, awarded Italy a 3-0 win against Serbia, in the wake of that abandoned Euro 2012 qualifier in Genoa in October, all is clearly not lost on the national-team front either. Indeed, Italy must now be hotter favourites than ever to win group C. However, all in all, it has thus far been a less than edifying autumn for Italian football on the international front.

An awkward corner

It hasn't exactly been edifying on the home front either. Not for the first time, Sampdoria's Cassano appears to have walked or talked himself into a very awkward corner. Asked by his club's owner, 74-year-old Riccardo Garrone, to turn up and collect an award from a Sampdoria supporters club in Sestri Levante, just down the coast from Genoa, Cassano declined the offer.

Not only did he refuse to make an appearance but he also exchanged in a lively dialogue with Garrone, during which he allegedly declined to turn up at "that shithouse of a hotel...for that asshole of a prize". Cassano then

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Bad boy...Cassano finds himself in trouble once again

Up in arms...Cristian Brocchi leads Lazio protests over a decision by referee Morganti in the Rome derby

stormed out to the accompaniment of some very non-parliamentary language, overheard by astonished fans present at Sampdoria's Gloriano Mugnaini training centre in Bogliasco, near Genoa.

For the time being, Cassano has been dropped and Sampdoria have lodged a request with the football federation's arbitration committee to have the player's contract rescinded and his £4.5million pay packet frozen. Furthermore, team sponsor ERG – the oil refinery company controlled by Garrone – is suing the player for "damage" to its image.

Even though the player has since apologised for his behaviour, it would seem that Cassano will have difficulty in winning his way back into the Sampdoria camp.

However, he may be helped by the fans, many of whom called on Garrone and Cassano to bury the hatchet during a subsequent 0-0 home draw with Catania. Needless to say, the fans would argue that with Cassano back in the team, Sampdoria would easily see off sides such as Catania.

> **"Lazio may not win the title but they will lead the others on a merry dance for some while to come"**

Inevitably, the incident has prompted speculation that the talented Cassano will now be on the move, with Inter, Juventus, Milan and even Manchester City touted as possible destinations. In the meantime, the whole episode may well have cost Cassano a call-up for Italy's November friendly with Romania, even if his long-term place in Cesare Prandelli's new-look side is not (yet) in jeopardy.

Nor is the remarkable Serie A campaign of surprise league leaders Lazio yet in jeopardy – and that notwithstanding a painful 2-0 derby loss to cross-town rivals Roma. With seven wins, one draw and one defeat (2-0 away to Sampdoria on the opening weekend of the season) from their first nine games, Lazio went into the derby clearly in better shape, mentally and physically, than their Roman cousins.

However, derbies have their own logic and Lazio lost out, not just to two penalties, both correct decisions, but also to their own overly cautious first-half attitude. It was only after they had fallen behind to Marco Borriello's 52nd-minute penalty that they began to play their best football, coming close to an equaliser when Pasquale Foggia hit the bar. In the end, they were finished off by a late Roma counter-attack which prompted the second penalty, this time slotted home by Mirko Vucinic.

Even if the Lazio camp were furious with referee Emidio Morganti, all is not lost for them. For a start, despite the loss, they remain top of Serie A, two points clear of Milan, three points above Inter and four ahead of Juventus. More importantly, their second-half performance suggested that in Uruguay goalkeeper Fernando Muslera, Brazilian defender Andre Dias, Argentinian midfielder Cristian Ledesma and Brazil playmaker Hernanes, they have the nucleus of a side that will almost certainly not win the title but one which will lead the others on a merry dance for some while to come. ●

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Deju vu for Porto

With a bright young coach, Porto are again the team to beat

PORTUGAL

PEDRO PINTO in Lisbon

A YOUNG, TALENTED coach, with experience abroad, walks through the door at Porto and proceeds to sweep all before him. Remind you of anyone?

It's no surprise that Andre Villas-Boas is being called the new Jose Mourinho. He is bright, brash and competent, but, most of all, he's a winner. It is still too early to judge the 33 year-old who worked under Mourinho at Porto, Chelsea and Internazionale, but he has already made an impact at the Estadio do Dragao similar to the one made by his mentor Mourinho.

Numbers don't lie and Villas-Boas' stats tell a story of total domination since he took over the reigns in June. After 10 league games, Porto hold an historic 10-point lead over second-place Benfica. Never before has a team had such an advantage at the top of the table so early in the season.

Furthermore, what made that statistic even more impressive was the way in which Porto had increased their lead over their closest followers, beating last year's champions Benfica 5-0 in November's *classico* with goals from Silvestre Varela, Falcao (two) and Hulk (two).

It was Benfica's heaviest defeat by their rivals and signalled a changing of the guard. Having soared above the competition to win the title last term, the Eagles of Lisbon were well and truly grounded by the end of 90 torrid minutes in Porto. Many newspapers proclaimed Villas-Boas' team as champions even though the league was only a couple of months old.

After seeing his team thrash Benfica, Villas-Boas refused to get carried away and instead challenged his side to keep up their unbeaten run as they clinched their 14th win in 16 competitive matches this season.

"Is the title decided?" he asked. "You have to ask the Benfica manager. What I want is for my players to prove that they keep it going."

So far they have shown no signs of weakness. Led by Hulk, who has been truly incredible this season with 15 goals already to his name, Porto have looked like a scoring machine that will be hard to contain. Even after losing two key players in Bruno Alves and Raul Meireles at the beginning of the season, Villas-Boas has been able to build a solid unit around a core group of talented South Americans who have assimilated his football philosophy – one which is based on discipline and organisation.

> **"Porto hold an historic 10-point lead over second-place Benfica. Never before has a team had such an advantage so early in the season"**

All the weapons necessary

While Colombia's Falcao has formed a formidable partnership with Hulk, Fernando from Brazil and Argentina's Fernando Belluschi have pulled the strings in midfield and Maicon has come to the fore in the centre of the defence. Add to the mix former Sporting captain Joao Moutinho and electric winger Silvestre Varela, and you have all the weapons necessary for an assault on the league title.

You get the feeling, however, that winning in Portugal won't be enough for Villas-Boas; he craves continental acclaim. After getting a taste of international success working as a scout and assistant for Mourinho in England and Italy, he wants to make his own mark in Europe. So far Porto are leading their group in the Europa League and they look a sure bet to qualify for the next phase. If they can keep the momentum going they could even challenge for the trophy.

It will all come down to how Villas-Boas, who is still only 33, copes with the pressure.

Then again, if he needs a helping hand, he can always call upon his predecessor for advice. ●

In the thick of it... Villas-Boas oversees his wing-back Alvaro Pereira's challenge on Eduardo Salvio of Benfica

Pellegrini's return

The former Real Madrid coach is back in the game with Malaga and could return to haunt his old club

IT TOOK Manuel Pellegrini just nine matches to return to Spanish football. Nine matches, 13 hours on a flight from Santiago, a transfer at Barajas, another flight to Pablo Ruiz Picasso Airport and a bundle through a packed terminal, where he was met by cheers and applause, and where, the sports daily *AS* said, "madness broke out".

From there it was off to his hotel and then on to the Rosaleda, where he signed a contract. A little before midnight on a Thursday, almost a day after he set off from his home in Chile, it was official: Manuel Pellegrini was the new coach of Malaga.

"This is a real challenge," Pellegrini said as he arrived on the Costa del Sol. It certainly is; the demands will be high and the margin for error slim. Get it right, though, and this could prove a fantastic move for the former Villarreal and Real Madrid coach – the chance to restart his career.

Besides, if he could withstand the pressure of the Madrid job last season, always remaining impeccably polite, rising above the tawdry and often vicious campaign launched against him, he is entitled to believe that what now awaits will be nothing in comparison.

But there will certainly be pressure. This summer, Malaga became the first Spanish club to experience what could be described as "an English-style buyout", with a rich foreign investor taking over at the club. The 43-year-old Qatari sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser al Thani bought 97 per cent of the club's shares for a total of £30million – including the purchase of the shares of former owner and president Fernando Sanz, plus other shareholders, redevelopments at the Rosaleda, and the clearing of a £12m debt. Sanz has stayed on as a football adviser, while 29-year-old Abdullah Ghubn became vice-president and runs the club.

Al Thani announced that he wanted to take Malaga into the Champions League. He wants them to be the big power in the south of Spain, challenging Madrid's hold of the centre and Barcelona in the north.

It was a big statement for a club who have never won anything and whose major claim to fame is that they have been promoted to the top flight more times than any other club. And that, inevitably, means they have been relegated from La Liga a hell of a lot of times too, only escaping the drop on the final day of last season with a 1-1 draw against a Real Madrid side who already knew their title chance had slipped away. In their various guises – Malaga officially folded and were reconstructed under a slightly different name in 1992 – it would have been their 13th relegation.

The new owner brought investment too; not crazy investment but significant by Spanish standards. A total of £14.5m was spent on signings – the fifth most in Spain (the fourth most discounting Valencia, who spent in excess of £17m but made a net profit of over £38m). In came Eliseu, Sandro Silva, Salomon Rondon, Edinho and Quincy Owusu-Abeyie, among others.

Pace and aggression

Not that everyone was happy. The club's director general, Yasmin Al Sahoud, was sacked after the very first game following differences with the management. Expectations were high and, watching the pace and aggression of the Malaga forwards, it was easy to see why. After a thumping of Getafe, the defeated coach, Michel, could only shrug: "It's impossible to stop them on the run, they are unbelievably quick. You could set a greyhound on Quincy and you still wouldn't catch him."

If Al Sahoud didn't last long, Jesualdo Ferreira, the veteran Portuguese coach brought in from Porto where he won three successive league titles, didn't last much longer. There had been plenty of goals – they won 5-3 in Zaragoza, 2-0 at Getafe and lost 3-2 to Villarreal – but the results weren't arriving. One draw and four defeats following that win over Getafe saw Malaga slip into the relegation zone. At home they lost five our of five and the 2-1 defeat by Real Sociedad was the final straw. Jesualdo was sacked and Pellegrini, who had spoken to both Galatasaray and Liverpool since leaving Real Madrid, arrived. He has signed a contract, reportedly worth around £8.5m, until 2013. Meanwhile, it has cost Malaga £6m to pay off Jesualdo – not that any of this should stop them going into the winter transfer window. As Pellegrini puts it: "This club wants to grow."

> "Pellegrini has gone back to the mediocrity he should never have left in the first place"
>
> *Madrid sports daily Marca*

Under Pellegrini, those Malaga fans who gathered at the airport are convinced that they can do just that. After all, his record in Spain is exceptional. With Villarreal, he never finished below seventh, ending the 2004-05 campaign in third and the 2007-08 season in a historic runners-up slot. He took the club to a Champions League semi-final and was a missed penalty away from the Final in Paris in 2006.

His record and commitment to a footballing style – a technical, patient, elaborate South American passing game – convinced sporting director Jorge Valdano to bring him to Real Madrid for the second coming of the galacticos.

On the face of it, he did extremely well there too. Madrid had an incredible season, picking up 31 wins, 13 of them away (nine consecutively) and 18 at home (15 on the trot) – all records. Their haul of 102 goals was the second-highest total ever and it might have been more but for the 22 shots that hit a post. In the end, they amassed 96 points – which would have been a La Liga record but for Barcelona racking up 99.

When Valdano described Pellegrini's season as "impeccable", others disagreed. Among those was the club's president, Florentino Perez, who had decided early in the season that he did not rate his new coach. He was not impressed that Pellegrini had publicly spoken out against the sale of Arjen Robben and Wesley Sneijder –

who both went on to have extraordinary seasons elsewhere. Pellegrini felt that he had been left alone in the line of fire, unprotected and undefended, with his authority removed. He admitted that he had barely talked to Perez.

Brutal attacks

It was not entirely coincidental that the relationship between coach and the country's best-selling newspaper, the sports daily *Marca*, was even worse. *Marca*'s attacks were as constant as they were brutal. Even doctoring the statistics was not beneath them as they led a campaign not only to get Pellegrini sacked but also, it seemed, to destroy him forever.

When *Marca* noticed, to their horror, that he was on course to win their statistically-generated manager of the year award, he began receiving a "0 out 3 rating" after every game while his nearest rival, Pep Guardiola, began to receive "3 out of 3" every time – even after a dreadful 0-0 draw with Espanyol. The end result was what they wanted it to be and Pep pipped Pellegrini to the post.

The run-up to Real Madrid-Malaga at the Bernabeu in March, pitching Pellegrini against his former club and his would-be executioners, is likely to provide fascinating if painful reading.

The good news for Pellegrini is that, despite Perez and *Marca*'s best efforts, he has not been forgotten by those who rated him highly. The bad news is that he has not been forgotten by those who hate him either. He is walking back into a war that he did not start and, it seems, he cannot end. As he arrived at Malaga airport he was, wrote *Marca*, "treated like galactico". They said so with a sense of incredulousness and contempt. "Pellegrini," insisted the paper's editor, "has gone back to the mediocrity which he should never have left in the first place."

Pellegrini has returned to Spain, to its football and its circus. It's a challenge, all right, and the chance to prove people wrong. ●

The heat is on...Pellegrini faces a tough challenge in pleasing Malaga's new Middle East owners

Brest out in front

The northern minnows lead the tightest Ligue 1 race for years

FRANCE

HOWARD JOHNSON in Paris

HAS THERE ever been such a topsy-turvy season in France's Ligue 1? After the unlikely scenario of unfancied Rennes sitting on top of the table for the first time in 40 years, now it's the turn of the even less vaunted Brest to take the No1 slot.

Admittedly it's only been a mere 26 years since the northern club with an average gate of around 13,000 last led the table, but given that coach Alex Dupont's side were only promoted from Ligue 2 in second place at the end of last season it's nothing short of a miraculous renaissance all the same. And that's not the whole story.

The club where World Cup winner Stephane Guivarc'h started his career and David Ginola spent two years has endured a particularly torrid time of late. As recently as 1991 the club had to fold as a professional entity due to its crippling debts and operate on a strictly amateur basis, before finally making it back into the professional ranks through promotion to the French third division in 2000.

Much of the credit for Brest's current lofty position lies with Dupont. The 56-year-old from Dunkirk has never managed one of France's acknowledged big clubs, but nonetheless has won a reputation as a canny operator in the course of his 25-year-plus career.

After inheriting a side that finished 14th in the second division in 2009, Dupont quickly moulded a decent outfit that achieved promotion on the back of a game plan that demanded plenty of movement, support of the man with the ball at all times and an ability to make a pass both crisply and sharply. It's a relatively sophisticated approach that eschews the long ball and is well suited to Ligue 1 – as evidenced by the fact that eight members of the side that gained promotion are still Brest regulars.

Dupont's side posted an impressive 21 points from their first 11 games to make it to first place and went eight games without conceding a goal until losing 3-1 at Lille. Much of the credit for this miserly defence must go to goalkeeper Steeve Elana, a 30-year-old journeyman who arrived from Caen in 2005 and is in the form of his life.

Canny operator...Dupont has created a Brest team that are pleasing on the eye

> "Dugarry has rightly pointed out while lauding Brest's achievements you have to question the quality of the opposition"

Former France forward turned respected TV pundit Christophe Dugarry has rightly pointed out that, while obviously lauding Brest's remarkable achievement, you also have to question the quality of opposition in front of the leaders. After seeing Bordeaux's national team defender Michael Ciani being made a mug of when Brest won 2-0 at the Stade Chaban-Delmas, Dugarry called the efforts of their opponents "pathetic".

He was right, too, so there's no doubt things will get tougher for the new boys as the season goes on. The fact Brest have scored only 12 goals in 12 games suggests they're going to have to up their game to maintain momentum. At the same stage last season Ligue 1's surprise package Montpellier had scored 17. Admittedly they'd also conceded 10 more than Brest at the same point – a stat that won't be lost on Dupont, who has to operate on the 19th smallest budget in the 20-team division. Staying in Ligue 1 will clearly still be his primary objective, but there's no doubt that everyone connected with Brest richly deserves their moment in the sun.

Puel under threat

Of course, it makes a pleasant change to see a European league that for once isn't dominated by the same clubs season after season...unless, of course, you happen to be in charge of one of France's traditional powerhouses. Lyon coach Claude Puel was under the very real threat of being axed following a particularly insipid start to the season and despite the highly public support of his excitable president, Jean-Michel Aulas.

Five league games without defeat took some of the heat off Puel, but should Lyon falter again during this campaign the former Lille boss will surely find himself on an increasingly sticky wicket.

Not so Marseille boss Didier Deschamps, whose team put a sluggish start to the season behind them to creep up into fourth place – three points behind Brest with a game in hand. The tardy departure of serial top scorer Mamadou Niang to Fenerbahce in Turkey in the middle of August understandably left Deschamps' plans in some disarray, and the integration of two new strikers in Nice's Loic Remy and Toulouse's Andre-Pierre Gignac meant l'OM were slow out of the blocks.

The signs are there, though, that the champions won't give up their title without an almighty fight and they are still the club with the most realistic chance of winning Ligue 1 this season. Marseille's home meeting with the much-improved Rennes at the end of October would no doubt have helped clarify the picture somewhat – even at this early stage – but the game was called off as torrential rain sweeping the south east of the country left the Stade Velodrome pitch waterlogged.

What we do know, however, is that with three points separating the top eight, this is shaping up to be one of the most open title battles in years. ●

Dark days for Feyenoord

The struggling Rotterdam club suffer the heaviest defeat in their history

HOLLAND

KLAAS-JAN DROPPERT in The Hague

WHICH CLUB can suffer the biggest league defeat in their history yet still declare the coach's position untouchable and then watch 40,000 fans express their loyalty at their next match while a group of investors give the team a much-needed financial boost? Try Feyenoord.

Already £35million in debt and with no money to invest in players, the Rotterdam club knew this was going to be a difficult season. But seven defeats in their opening 13 games and sitting just two points above the relegation zone is something no one could have imagined.

Feyenoord hit rock bottom when they were hammered 10-0 away at PSV, their worst-ever Eredivisie defeat. Afterwards, coach Mario Been said he would understand if the board fired him. But the popular Been, who was a crowd favourite during his playing days in the 1980s, and technical director Leo Beenhakker were cleared of any blame by both the board and the fans.

Feyenoord's problems started a few years ago when expensive veterans such as Giovanni Van Bronckhorst, Roy Makaay, Kevin Hofland and Denny Landzaat were signed in a bid to return the club to the top. When the European success that was necessary to fund such huge spending failed to materialise, the financial problems worsened.

> **"Three days after the humiliation in Eindhoven, 41,600 fans turned up for a game against Venlo"**

Beenhakker had to "shop with an empty wallet" this summer and in came unknowns such as Adil Auassar, Ruben Schaken, Fyodor Smolov and Michael Lumb – none of whom has been a hit so far. At the same time Been, who complains that his squad has so few experienced players, has had to offload the veterans.

It is quite remarkable that the fans have stayed so loyal to Been and Beenhakker – and three days after the humiliation in Eindhoven, 41,600 of them turned up at the De Kuip stadium for a game against VVV Venlo.

A few days later a group of investors called the Feyenoord Friends announced they would donate over £14million to lighten the club's debts. The group will get shares and two board positions in return.

However, the bad news for Been is that the money can't be used to sign new recruitments during the winter break and the three-times European cup winners face a long season with little chance of glory.

Saved from bankruptcy

Vitesse, another club with financial problems, were saved from bankruptcy when sold to Georgian businessman Merab Jordania, the first foreign club owner in Holland. When introducing the former chairman of Dinamo Tblisi and the Georgian FA, his predecessor, Maasbert Schouten, said Vitesse would win the league title within three years. Euphoria had no limits at the club they call "FC Hollywood on the Rhine" and wild speculations about major signings started.

"Give me three days and I will present new players", said Jordania. However, rather than Messi, Ronaldo and Rooney, they hired Ismail Aissati (on loan from Ajax) and Nemanja Matic, Slobodan Rajkovic, Matej Delac (all on loan from Chelsea), and signed Guram Kashia from Dinamo Tblisi and Marcus Pedersen from Stromgodset – hardly players to stir up the club to silverware.

Meanwhile, people began wondering how Jordania had earned his money in the post-Soviet Union era and whether he was actually just a representative of a much bigger east European millionaire. It appeared he had been involved in the transfers of Georgi Kinkladze to Manchester City and Shota Arveladze to Ajax, but then imprisoned for fraud. However, the Dutch FA declared no irregularities had been found and the deal to purchase Vitesse was a legal one.

The suspicion remains that Jordania, a close friend of Chelsea's Roman Abramovich, will use Vitesse to park players from Stamford Bridge in the hope of attracting other clubs and Vitesse have already seen coach Theo Bos replaced by former Barcelona wing-back Albert Ferrer – a man without any coaching experience but with a playing history at Chelsea and connections in London.

Could "FC Hollywood on the Rhine" be turning into "Chelsea on the Rhine"? ●

Embarrassment...coach Harry Been tries to console his distraught players after their 10-0 thrashing at PSV

Empty terraces

As the UAE prepares to host FIFA's Club World Cup, the local league is discovering that money cannot buy you supporters

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

JAMES MONTAGUE in Abu Dhabi

THERE WERE TWO different schools of thought on Fabio Cannavaro's unveiling at his new club, Al Ahli, in July: it was either a coronation or an admission of failure.

On the one hand you had the local media. When the former Italy captain and World Cup winner appeared at a press conference in the United Arab Emirates to announce his signing for, it was hailed as a bright new dawn for football in the country. This was, after all, a place where vast amounts of money had been earned and then poured into foreign leagues. The huge fortunes bestowed on Manchester City by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, a member of the Abu Dhabi royal family, had smashed apart the top-four complacency of the English Premier League.

Now, the theory went, it was time to spruce up the game in their own back yard. Cannavaro would be joined by David O'Leary, and other marquee players and coaches would follow.

"I could feel straight away that Al Ahli was a team that is investing in the future," Cannavaro told the awaiting media. "Here there is not as much pressure as in Italy and I can help the younger players gain from my experience. It is not an economic choice, but a family choice."

But then, on the other hand, you had the international press, incredulous that a player who had captained the World Cup holders in South Africa would even consider a move to a league that isn't even one of the best in the Gulf, let alone Asia.

"It's a no go for interviews at the moment, mate, they [Cannavaro and David O'Leary] won't speak to anyone until they have won something," explained Mark Bell, Al Ahli's sporting director afterwards. But then the truth came out. "They [the press] weren't asking the right kind of questions. It was all 'what's the size of your contract?' and 'why are you here?'"

The negative questions were strangely expunged from the coverage in the UAE media.

The two versions of truth – one cleansed of negativity and criticism for the home audience, the other cynical and critical from outside observers – is a canny allegory for the treatment of the UAE since it emerged as an economic and footballing player less than a decade ago.

First there was the economic mirage of Dubai and its charismatic leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, who bet big on using sport – and football in particular – to market his tiny emirate on the shores of the Persian Gulf. He narrowly lost out on buying Liverpool but, shortly afterwards, had to accept a bailout from neighbours and new local power Abu Dhabi to avoid an economic catastrophe. They flexed their muscles further by purchasing Manchester City.

> "Football is the country's sport. The locals love it. This is a country that has told us dreams can become a reality"
>
> *Former UFL chief executive Romy Gai*

Domestic embarrassment

Massaging the image of the UAE and its seven constituent emirates had always been part of the goal, but as hundreds of millions of pounds were being poured into footballing projects abroad, the domestic league remained something of an embarrassment: semi-amateur, totally dependent on the patronage of various royal families and unable to produce players that could reach the high-water mark of Emirati football – their short-lived but riotous appearance at Italia 90, the one and only time the UAE has reached the finals.

So, in 2008, it was announced that the league would be given a Premier League-style makeover. Professionalism would be mandatory, tickets would be issued for games, big-name foreign players would be signed – following the same model in Qatar which saw the likes of Marcel Desailly and Ronald De Boer end their careers in the Middle East – and TV deals sought. And the man put in charge of this revolution was the UFL's chief executive Romy Gai, who had previously enjoyed a successful stint as Juventus' commercial director.

"Football is the country's sport," said Gai. "The locals love it. If a European club is bought [by a UAE royal family] then international football offers us lots of opportunities. This is a country that has told us that dreams can become reality."

But those dreams didn't last long. Despite the expensive re-branding and new spirit of professionalism, the fans stayed away. When Gai resigned, his departure was marked by *Gulf News'* witty headline "Fall Gai".

Attendances remained stubbornly low and last season the average gate in the UFL was 2,600, a rise of 20 per cent but still bellow expectations given that hundreds of millions of dollars had been pumped in. It was worse when the national team played. The attendance at a recent friendly against Angola in Abu Dhabi was just 200; when World Cup finalists Chile (arguably one of the most exciting teams in South Africa) arrived a few weeks previously the numbers were better – just over 400 turned up.

Gai's replacement at the UFL, Carlo Nohra, has pinpointed attendances as one of the biggest issues facing the league. "This next leap is essential," he told local English-language newspaper *Emirates 24/7*. "We have to recognise that the majority of the population in this country is expatriate and they all love football."

But the problem lies much deeper. The UAE is a country in almost constant migratory flux, with the CIA calculating that it has the highest net migration rate of any country in the world. Less than 20 per cent of the population are UAE nationals, the group within society most likely to have any deep, lifelong affinity with a local club. The rest are migrants, in the country temporarily to make some money before escaping home, whether they are a British estate agent or an Indian labourer toiling on one of the country's ubiquitous building sites.

It is these migrants – from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India – who make up the vast majority of the UFL's potential expat market. Most have no interest in the game, preferring instead to watch the occasional (and usually

worldmags

Low profile...Michael N'dri of Dubai is sandwiched by Al Ahli's Ali Hussain (left) and Ahmad Mathaad in a league game

sold out) international cricket matches featuring teams from the sub-continent.

The gap between the local and the international will disappear for a few days in December when the Club World Cup comes to Abu Dhabi and stadiums will largely be full.

Press speculation

Al Jazira – Sheikh Mansour's first love – are top of the league, unbeaten this season, and there has also been press speculation that other players will soon be joining the UFL. Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes and Gary Neville have all been mooted as possible Al Ahli players for next year. But even the huge, tax-free wages may soon be a thing of the past and by 2013 all state support for football clubs will end. Whether this will still apply to members of the royal family using their personal fortunes is unclear.

"At the moment the club is not profitable, which is why we have a government fund," Ahmad Khalifa Hammad, chief executive of Al Ahli told *Arabian Business*. "But this government fund, we know, sooner or later will be stopped."

Hammad, like the rest of the UAE's footballing authorities, will hope the league's turnstiles will start moving soon. But they have learnt a hard lesson that was never going to apply to the takeover of English Premier League sides: money can buy a lot of things, but a fan culture isn't one of them. ●

Bottom of the pile

With a squad containing 13 members of the world's lowest-ranked national team, Hekari United are under no illusions about what faces them in the Club World Cup

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PAUL MOON

ALTHOUGH THEY inhabit very different environments, Hekari United and their Club World Cup opponents Al Wahda have one thing in common: they both owe their success to the petrodollar.

Formed in 2003 and known initially as Souths United, Hekari had secured two consecutive promotions to win a place in the top division of Port Moresby's amateur regional league before gaining the patronage of Kapi Natto and access to levels of funding which were unprecedented in Papua New Guinean sport.

The patriarch of a clan owning land on the Kutubu oil field, rugby league was Natto's prime sporting interest until he took Hekari under his wing and entered them in the new National Soccer League in 2006.

The NSL, the nation's first semi-pro football competition, originally consisted of five clubs and has only added a couple more in the interim, but Hekari have dominated it, winning all four titles and losing just five games in the process.

Hekari's stranglehold is due to Natto persuading Petroleum Resources Ketubu, a company investing oil royalties, to enter into a sponsorship deal which has resulted in a steady stream of competent Solomon Islanders and Fijian players being lured to Port Moresby.

An initial Oceania Champions League foray two years ago saw Hekari lose their opening pair of games, but they recovered to finish just a point behind Koloale of the Solomon Islands in their group.

PNG's standard-bearers also started last season's campaign unconvincingly, recording a draw and a home loss before sweeping aside everyone before them.

Sadly, their greatest triumph, a 4-2 aggregate victory over Waitakere United in the OCL Final, occurred four months after Natto suffered a fatal heart attack and his son, John Kapi Natto, inherited ownership of Hekari. And the younger Natto's leadership qualities were soon tested as he dismissed four players for disciplinary breaches. Among them was Solomon Islands international midfielder Stanley Waita, who immediately joined Vanuatu champions Amicale.

On a wing and a prayer...Hekari give thanks after their victory over Waitakere in the OCL Final

> "One squad member has previously played in a World Cup, albeit the beach-football version"

This in itself would have created little disruption, but it also led to Alick Maemae, the man whose flair had given Hekari a vital edge against Waitakere in May, joining his friend and compatriot Waita in Port Vila.

Hekari have recruited energetically in recent months, however no newcomer can be regarded as an adequate replacement for Maemae – but at least one squad member has previously played in a World Cup, albeit the beach-football version, with 34-year-old defender Gideon Omokirio having appeared in three editions with the Solomon Islands.

Fiji striker Osea Vakatelesau can claim even greater fame than team-mate Omokirio as he was the joint-top scorer in qualifying matches for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Having reputedly commanded a £17,275 fee when transferring from Lautoka, he is believed to be the club's most expensive acquisition.

In addition, Hekari can call upon Henry Fa'arodo, who made 11 A-League appearances in Australia for Perth Glory back in 2006, and the globe-trotting German midfielder Yuki Richard Stalph.

However, the squad is still woefully short of players with experience beyond their own backyard and it includes five Fijians, six Solomon Islanders and 13 from Papua New Guinea – whose national side FIFA ranks as the worst in the world.

Coach Jerry Allen, who increases the Solomons' influence, won several New Zealand inter-collegiate honours alongside current Plymouth Argyle and All Whites striker Rory Fallon at Mount Albert Grammar School in Auckland before returning to Honiara and earning caps for his native country. He commenced coaching at senior club level when aged just 20 and must be regarded as Kapi Natto's wisest investment.

Allen suggests New Zealand's exploits in South Africa this year will inspire his team, but warns: "I don't think we can emulate them overnight. Obviously, we recognise we are playing at a much higher level than any of us have encountered in the past."

Hekari will certainly travel to the Club World Cup under no illusions about the difficulty of their task. ●

"Drillo" thriller

The return of Egil Olsen as coach has sparked an upturn in the national team's fortunes

NORWAY

SIGURD ODEGAARD in Oslo

WHEN THE Norwegian FA turned to former national coach Egil Olsen in January last year and asked him to take up the post once again after a disastrous 2008 season under Age Hareide, there was a lot of scepticism with critics regarding the move as a retrograde step.

"Football has moved on since the 1990s" was an argument used against the man who, despite the odds, had taken the national team to previously unforeseen heights.

"Drillo", as 58-year-old Olsen is nicknamed, took the country to the 1994 World Cup in the USA and France in 1998 – and no Norwegian will ever forget the memorable 2-1 victory against Brazil in Marseille to qualify for the knockout stage.

After resigning, Olsen had spells with Valerenga, Wimbledon, Fredrikstad and the Iraq national team.

He was then offered his old job back for a three-match spell against Germany, South Africa and Finland. After two wins –1-0 away to Germany and 3-2 at home against Finland – and a respectable 2-1 defeat away to South Africa, the Olsen magic seemed to be back.

His remarkable ability to make his players put his theories into practice is convincing and, having taken to him, the players wanted him to continue in the 2012 European Championship qualifiers. The federation agreed last year and Olsen will be in charge until Copenhagen's Staale Solbakken takes over when Norway's run in the tournament comes to an end.

Under Olsen, Norway got off to a terrific start in the qualifiers.

After a disappointing first half in Iceland, where the home side deservedly took the lead, Norway came back strongly with Brede Hangeland and Mohammed Abdellaoue scoring in a 2-1 victory.

The team's belief in Olsen grew and when mercurial Portugal came to Ullevaal in September there was no talk of Norway being the underdogs. Brann's Erik Huseklepp scored the only goal, slotting the ball home after Portugal goalkeeper Eduardo lost the ball in John Carew's challenge, while Hangeland and Kjetil Waehler were majestic in central defence.

Boss...Olsen

October's visit to Cyprus was regarded as a tricky one, but thanks to an early goal from John Arne Riise and another by Carew, Olsen's men found the necessary belief and calmness. Cyprus came back strongly and scored through Ioannis Okkas, but the Norwegians clung on to make it three wins out of three.

Football philosophy

No matter what people think of Olsen's football philosophy of getting the ball forward quickly and trying to catch the opposition defence off balance, you have to admit that he knows how to get results.

Talking to Norwegian daily newspaper *Dagbladet*, Olsen said in response to the tributes showered on him after having restored the faith in the national team: "I'm certainly no god. I don't even believe in God."

Olsen prefers the 4-5-1 system playing with two wide men, normally Huseklepp and Morten Gamst Pedersen. Carew is the preferred striker but Abdellaoue has done well when called upon.

Full-backs Tom Hogli and John Arne Riise often join the attack, while Christian Grindheim, Bjorn Helge Riise and Henning Hauger do most of the hard work in central midfield.

Goalkeeper John Knudsen made the occasional error in earlier matches, but he was rock solid in the three Euro qualifiers and has established himself as the first-choice No1.

In friendlies, Laurent Blanc brought his new-look France to Ullevaal in August and they were beaten 2-1 by a hard-working Norway side, with Huseklepp scoring both goals. Olsen then included youngsters Markus Henriksen and Ruben Yttergard in a 2-1 defeat in Croatia in October and Abdellaoue scored again.

Ever the realist, Olsen keeps his feet firmly on the ground, no matter what the results are. But if he continues to get the best out of his players even he will find it hard to keep expectations in check as the Euro qualifiers draw to a climax. ●

Chorus line...Norway take the acclaim from their fans after their Euro 2012 qualifying win over Cyprus in Larnaca

The new wave

Accent on youth is paying dividends for Dortmund

GERMANY

NICK BIDWELL in Munich

SHOULD THEY maintain their excellent autumnal form and go on to clinch the title in May, Borussia Dortmund's fourth Bundesliga crown will surely have to be recorded as the most satisfying of them all.

While their previous triumphs – in 1995, 1996 and 2002 – were based on spending power and the ability to buy off-the-peg stars such as Matthias Sammer, Andy Moller, Karlheinz Riedle, Jurgen Kohler, Tomas Rosicky and Marcio Amoroso, this season the immensely popular Ruhr side are having to do it the hard way – by working to a tight budget, identifying affordable young talent and carefully nurturing them.

When the club came perilously close to bankruptcy in 2005, it was forced to adopt severe austerity measures and supporters at the Westfalenstadion must have felt that their yellow-and-black world had been ripped apart. But football hotbeds like Dortmund – where every home game is an 80,000 sell-out – are not easily wiped off the footballing map.

Thanks to their incredible fan base, inspirational coach Jurgen Klopp and some savvy in the boardroom from chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke and general manager Michael Zorc, the rebuilding of the edifice has been completed far quicker than anyone could have foreseen.

Ultra-loyal, one-club-man Zorc, who was the linchpin of the Dortmunder midfield for 17 years before donning a managerial suit, might insist that talk of another Bundesliga crown is pie in the sky. "Those who seriously think we will go all the way have no idea how this game functions," he insists, but the evidence doesn't lie.

Nine wins from their first 11 league games – including victories over Bayern Munich, Schalke, Stuttgart, Wolfsburg and surprise pace-setters Mainz, with just one defeat, 2-0 at home by Bayer Leverkusen – and a top-ranking defence and front line indicates anything but a temporary phenomenon. And given the obvious drive and ambition of Klopp's predominantly youthful side, together with the coach's mastery of the psychological arts, any rival hoping for complacency to kick in could be in for a long wait.

Hunger for that first, elusive trophy is the fuel here and – whether it be left-back Marcel Schmelzer, central defenders Mats Hummels and Neven Subotic, engine-room regulators Nuri Sahin and Lars Bender, recently arrived Japan midfield scurrier Shinji Kagawa, teenage attacking all-rounder Mario Gotze or the impressive Kevin Grosskreutz wide on the left – not one of the Dortmunder new wave steps on to the pitch with anything less than a full tank.

The same verve and irresistibility applies to their main source of goals, Paraguay's World Cup striker Lucas Barrios, who in his second season leading the Dortmund line must be a good bet to surpass the 19 Bundesliga goals he amassed last term. Every defender in the country knows what a slippery customer he can be in the box, but few can subdue him for the entire 90 minutes.

"We have the ultimate confidence in him to put the ball in the back of the net," says team-mate Hummels. "Nine times out of 10 he'll get on the end of a cross."

Newly acquired ability

What has shocked many Bundesliga observers in the past few weeks is Dortmund's newly acquired ability to keep possession and change the pace of the game. Last season, a campaign in which they finished fifth, they could never be trusted to retain the ball for long, placing the emphasis on pace rather than precision. Not any more though. With Turkey's Sahin fast maturing into a world-class strategist, the scatter-gun approach looks to have been ditched for good.

"It's a truism that you can only play when you have the ball and this clearly was an area where we were lacking," says coach Klopp. "We needed to have more control. Giving possession away cheaply and then chasing all over to win it back is just wasteful. We're now much better at working the ball and making the space to launch attacks.

"We're playing with more intelligence, technique and variation."

While it's all systems go in Dortmund, panic buttons elsewhere

> **"We're playing with more intelligence, technique and variation"**
>
> *Dortmund coach Jurgen Klopp*

worldmags

Danger man...Dortmund's free-scoring Barrios (left) proves a handful for Hoffenheim defender Isaac Vorsah

in the Bundesliga are already being pressed with less than a third of the campaign gone.

Just as everyone in the Rhineland predicted in the summer, much-criticised Koln coach Zvonimir Soldo did not make November, while further south Christian Gross' career was headed in the same direction, unceremoniously told to clear his desk by his paymasters at struggling Stuttgart. Only a few months ago, Gross was heralded as a hero for taking the team from 16th to sixth in half a year; now has become the seventh boss fired by president Erwin Staudt since he took on the job in 2003.

Koln, three-times German champions and still regarded as one of the top football addresses in the country, truly are a house of horrors.

What with the utter disintegration of the Soldo regime, Colombia keeper Faryd Mondragon refusing to sit on the bench and star man Lukas Podolski openly blaming everybody but himself for the club's disastrous start to the season, farce does not begin to describe the unfolding events at the RheinEnergieStadion. ●

worldmags

The DP dilemma

Designated players have failed to pay their way in Major League Soccer

USA

PAUL GARDNER in New York

THE MLS designated-player scheme is a good idea – even essential – but one that has come off the rails because the clubs are finding out that splashing out high wages on a select few does not guarantee success.

On the face of it, allowing each MLS team to sign up to three top players and pay them above – way above – what the enforced salary cap permits is a good idea because it has led to the influx of several world famous, highly skilled players and brought about an improvement in the level of the domestic game.

> "The idea is essential because without it the MLS was heading for stagnation"

And the DP idea is essential because, without it, the league was heading for stagnation, condemned to eternal second-rate status by its own regulations which virtually prevented the signing of highly-salaried players.

The immediate result of the scheme was, of course, the arrival in July 2007 of David Beckham to join Los Angeles Galaxy for a salary of £3.3million a year – indeed, the DP regulation was even dubbed "the Beckham Rule". More of Beckham in a moment, suffice to say that his career with Galaxy has had its ups and downs.

Other big-name players followed, albeit slowly: Juan Pablo Angel in New York, Cuauhtemoc Blanco in Chicago, Freddie Ljungberg in Seattle, Denilson in Dallas, Claudio Lopez in Kansas. But it was not until this year that the full stretch of the DP rule was taken up by New York Red Bulls, who decided to go the whole hog and sign the permitted maximum of three DPs.

Test case

Joining the already established Angel in July was Thierry Henry, followed by Rafael Marquez in August. It is an assembly that makes Red Bulls a test case for the effectiveness of the DPs.

At first, things went well enough. Media recognition around the world –

Money jungle...Red Bulls' expensive trio of (from left) Angel, Henry and Marquez

which is just the sort of publicity that MLS loves – came with the signing of Henry, while Marquez was a signal to the hordes of Latino fans in the New York area that they were not forgotten.

On the field, new coach Hans Backe soon had his team winning and by late September had engineered a total reverse in Red Bulls' fortunes. From being the worst team in MLS in 2009, they finished on top of the Eastern Conference – a remarkable transformation – and at that point the three expensive DPs were looking a great investment.

But beneath the glow things were starting to unravel. As the season wound down, Red Bulls were winning, but they were finding goals difficult to come by and they were scraping 1-0 victories with a laboured style that was anything but stylish.

There seems little reason to doubt problems within the team were at the bottom of things, caused by the presence of three extravagantly paid players – Henry was on a reported £2.8m a year, Marquez £1.85m and Angel £1.2m – in a team in which the average salary of the rest of the squad was £60,000 and with eight players earning a basic of only £25,000.

Yet the most apparent dissatisfaction came from Angel, who had been the goalscoring star at Red Bulls – he was usually cited as the best example of a DP who had fulfilled expectations – but who now found himself way behind Henry and Marquez on the salary scale. He started to drop heavy hints that, wherever he played in 2011, it would not be with Red Bulls and eventually announced in September, in an interview on Spanish-language television, that he intended to leave at the end of the season.

Fizzled out

Back in July, the Henry-Angel partnership had been seen as a dream goalscoring machine. In Henry's first MLS game for Red Bulls, Angel scored twice, with the Frenchman providing the assist for both goals. But that was as good as the partnership ever got. After that, it fizzled out, and little was seen of any combination between the two on the field.

As the play-offs approached, the Red Bulls found themselves in a good position, with opponents San Jose Earthquakes being the team that had qualified with least points. In a two-legged tie, Red Bulls duly eked out an uninspiring 1-0 win in San Jose without Henry, who was sidelined with a knee injury. On home turf in the return, however, Red Bulls fell apart. With Henry still on the bench, his replacement, 17-year-old Juan Agudelo – one of the £25,000-a-year brigade – proved to be the home side's liveliest player. The problem was that Earthquakes were much, much livelier and romped to a 3-1 win to knock out Red Bulls.

With time running out and his side needing a goal to force at least extra time, Henry had been brought on – only to waste their best chance by heading tamely over the bar.

Summing up, Red Bulls' three-DP team could hardly be called a success. They had done well, but not well enough, and they had exposed the built-in problems that are sure to arise when huge salary differentials are stirred into the changing-room mix.

Henry, the second highest-paid player in MLS (after Beckham) had certainly not proved worth the money. In many ways, his first season was like Beckham's first with Galaxy: plenty of publicity and expectations, plenty of talk, but on the field only injuries and nothing in the way of sparkling play.

New York were not the only MLS team experiencing difficulties with a DP. In Seattle, coach Sigi Schmid ran out of patience with what he saw as Ljungberg's prima-donna attitude and the Swede was traded to Chicago Fire in August.

The daddy of DPs, Beckham, spent the first half of the MLS season recovering from the ruptured Achilles tendon he suffered while on loan to Milan, but Galaxy did well enough without him. His return has seen him, perhaps for the first time since he arrived, playing with considerable commitment for Galaxy – and playing regularly.

But the same puzzle is present in Los Angeles as in New York: why is it that the DP additions have not resulted in a more dynamic team? Galaxy – with Beckham, Landon Donovan and Edson Buddle – ought to be a stylish, attacking, goalscoring, entertaining, team. But dull, one-goal wins have marked their progress towards the MLS Cup.

> **"Red Bulls exposed the built-in problems sure to arise when huge salary differentials are stirred into the changing-room mix"**

Flaw in the system

DPs have been around for three seasons now, but not one has yet led his team to the championship. Spending big, as Red Bulls and Galaxy have done, is expected to produce results. So far it has not done so, although Galaxy and Beckham may, after four long years, alter that.

The lack of success, both in the games-won column and in the ability to produce entertaining teams, is puzzling. It could mean a flaw in the DP system: that it is never going to be easy to build a winning team with one or two massively-paid stars surrounded by a group of modestly and poorly-remunerated players. Or it may reflect the clubs' inability to select suitable players and manage them properly in the unusual team atmosphere that awaits them in MLS.

Serious thought is necessary to put what is a good idea back on the rails. ●

Alternative glory

Recent FA Cup successes have thrust FC United of Manchester into the mainstream

ENGLAND

DAVID CONN in Manchester

WHEN I WENT TO Gigg Lane, Bury, to write about FC United of Manchester, the rebel football club formed by Manchester United fans disaffected by the Glazer family's takeover at Old Trafford, I took my 11-year-old daughter with me – and we got more than we bargained for.

Started in 2005 and serially promoted since, FCUM are now in the Northern Premier League – which is three levels below the Football League – and have launched a community share scheme for supporters (of the club and its cause) to raise £1.5million towards a stadium of their own in Newton Heath, where Manchester United's extraordinary story began.

FCUM's founding fathers, I already knew, have tried to build their club with the positive values they feel United lost: owned by supporters, cheap entry, a community ethos written into the very constitution.

And if such allegiance to principles can sound worthy, I also knew from going to prior FCUM matches that the fans stand and sing throughout, loud and proud, mixing FCUM celebration songs with protests about the Glazers' unholy debt.

> **"My daughter tapped me on the arm and pointed. 'Look, that banner over there says "pies not prawns",' she said. I did my best to explain"**

What never occurred to me was that might be wandering into the most glorious two matches of FCUM's young history: a 1-0 victory over Barrow in the FA Cup fourth-qualifying round, and then a magnificent 3-2 win at League One Rochdale, which was televised live. That game, with its fiercely passionate atmosphere created by the FCUM fans and the delirious celebrations which erupted after the final whistle, thrust the achievements of the self-started club – and its possibilities for a better way to run football – finally into mainstream recognition.

Secret plotting

My daughter has never been interested in football and my secret plotting to brainwash her into its live joys have previously been half-hearted. The £60 cost of going to a Premier League match has never offered a great incentive, so she hadn't been to a match since she was four – when I was told off at Glossop North End, the famous one-time First Division club now in the depths of non-league, for not stopping her running onto the pitch just before a corner.

At Gigg Lane, standing in the FCUM singing section, she was captivated. Particularly by the swearing. "What you hear at the game, stays at the game," my friend instructed her, with a smile. She loved the fans' signature song, *Sloop John B*, and then when they sang: "Glazer, wherever you may be\You bought Old Trafford but you can't buy me," she asked what it meant.

And so I tried to explain. These people, many in their 40s and 50s, always supported Manchester United, went as boys when it was cheap as chips to get in, then a family from America was allowed to buy the club, they put their debts on to it (I'm not sure she quite grasped the niceties of the leveraged buyout), put ticket prices up, and then these fans decided they'd had enough and formed their own club, to do things the right way. Oh – and Old Trafford is where United play.

In the second half, she tapped my arm and pointed. "Look, that banner over there says 'pies not prawns'," she said. I did my best to explain.

I'd also warned her that the team you sympathise with – I can't quite support FCUM, having always been a Manchester City fan – don't always win, that Barrow are two leagues higher (in the Conference Premier) and would therefore be much stronger. They were, but then in the 76th minute Carlos Roca scored the winner, and my daughter was stunned by her first experience of a home crowd celebrating a goal. Afterwards, I interviewed Roca and he joked that, on Monday, the women at his office job in posh south Manchester wouldn't care less – and my daughter felt a bit sorry about that.

It was her insistence that we go to Rochdale, in the first-round proper. There, at a packed, floodlit Spotland, with FCUM 2-0 up, the fans began to sing: "Are you watching, David Gill?" I was in the foothills of explaining that one when Rochdale scored. I had warned her that Rochdale are four leagues above FCUM, they are fully professional, their players don't have to work like Carlos and so in the second half FCUM would tire. They did – but then, in the 94th minute, Mike Norton scored the winner and everybody went disbelievingly mad.

I'm now worried that FC United of Manchester might have given my daughter a fantasy idea of what football is like: the fans own the club, they're friendly, bound by a solid core of common purpose, sing all the way through, and the team always scores a late winner.

When they sang "Que Sera Sera" I had to explain that Wembley is the famous stadium in London where the FA Cup Final is played. She replied: "We're going there, aren't we Dad?" ●

Fantasy football...Norton (centre) scores FCUM's winner at Rochdale

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Loyal supporters...FCUM fans at Spotland

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All change

A disappointing World Cup for the continent was followed by the inevitable managerial changes

AFRICA

MARK GLEESON in Cape Town

ALL SIX OF THE coaches in charge of African teams at this summer's World Cup finals have moved on, the last of them heading to the Middle East and a lucrative club contract just weeks after he said he was about to renew his current deal with Ghana.

Milovan Rajevac's departure to Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia has been seen as something of a mercenary act, adding fuel to the growing fire over the role of expatriate coaches on the continent.

That the Serbian is getting a better deal in Jeddah is not in any question, but his real reasons for leaving the Black Stars are unclear and could have as much to do with his frustrations at the workings of the Ghana Football Association as they do with picking up a bigger pay cheque.

Ghana, though, feel hard done by, arguing that Rajevac was plucked from the obscurity of the Serbian provincial leagues and, having made his name on the back of their talented players, he should have shown greater appreciation in return.

Ghana, who appointed Rajevac's assistant Kwesi Appiah as caretaker, must now begin the search for a replacement – with the absence of the Serb's steely hand on the wheel all too evident when the Black Stars contrived to draw 0-0 at home to Sudan in their most recent African Nations Cup qualifier. They beat Sudan easily home and away in the 2010 World Cup preliminaries.

Nigeria, for whom the threat of suspension by FIFA for ongoing political interference in the running of their football federation has now been fully lifted, also have a new coach in Samson Siasia. The 43-year-old, who was previously coaching Nigerian club side Heartland, has enjoyed success with the country's under-20 and Olympic sides, and he replaces Lars Lagerback who rejected the offer of a new deal after a disappointing World Cup.

Meanwhile, Algeria appointed Abdelhak Benchikha just days after Rabah Saadane resigned in the wake of a home draw with Tanzania at the start of the 2012 Nations Cup qualifiers. Benchikha then went one better in the red-face department by losing his debut game to the Central African Republic and already the vultures are circling around the former Under-23 coach.

Already in trouble

The highest profile addition to the ranks of coaches of African national sides is former Spain boss Javier Clemente, who has taken over Cameroon. However, his brief tenure is already in trouble after the Indomitable Lions dropped points at home to the Democratic Republic of Congo in their Nations Cup qualifier in October.

Clemente was summoned to explain himself to the country's sports minister, which signalled a warning shot across the bow.

The game had been moved to Garoua – despite temperatures in the capital of the North Region hovering near 40°C – and the Spaniard blamed the draw on the poor pitch. He also claims he is yet to settle on his own choices for the squad, having stuck so far with the group selected for the post-World Cup friendly win in Poland when Jacques Songo'o served as caretaker coach.

Ivory Coast, after the excess of paying Sven Goran Eriksson a king's ransom to work at the World Cup, have settled on Francois Zahoui as their new coach. He is a former international striker notable for being the first African to compete in Serie A – even though most of his career was spent at Nancy in France. His coaching credentials are sparse, however, and he will likely need the return of Didier Drogba to the line-up sooner rather than later to avoid getting into any tight spots.

South Africa's new coach Pitso

Ambitious...South Africa's Mosimane

Over and out...Rajevac and Ghana lose to Uruguay on a penalty shoot-out in the World Cup quarter-finals

Mosimane is seen as ambitious, studious and enthusiastic, and has spent four years working with Carlos Alberto Parreira and Joel Santana.

It had long been planned that after the World Cup, South Africa would turn to a local coach to handle the team and Mosimane has cleverly sought to keep the continuity built up over the last years, successfully persuading Parreira's long-time assistant Jairo Leal to stay.

Since July, a total of 34 of Africa's football-playing nations have made coaching changes – a figure that is not unprecedented at the start of a new cycle of competition.

The newcomers are mostly foreign – eight of them French, including 73-year-old Jules Accorsi who is making waves with the Central African Republic, and regulars like Alain Giresse (who has moved from the Gabon job to Mali), Michel Dussuyer (Benin to Guinea) and Robert Nouzaret (last with Guinea, now the Democratic Republic of Congo).

> **"Since July, a total of 34 of Africa's football-playing nations have made coaching changes"**

Morocco initially agreed to allow former Belgium international and Marseille coach Eric Gerets to combine managing their national side with leading Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in the remainder of their Asian Champions League campaign before taking on the job full-time in mid-November.

Paolo Duarte tried that with Burkina Faso and Le Mans last season but lasted only six months in Ligue 1. The young Portuguese coach remains in charge of the Burkinabe, having recently signed a new contract. ●

Coaches in Africa
(post 2010 World Cup)

Algeria Abdelhak Benchikha (new)
Angola Zeca Amaral (new)
Benin (currenty vacant)
Botswana Stanley Tshosane
Burkina Faso Paulo Duarte
Burundi Adel Amrouche
Cameroon Javier Clemente (new)
Cape Verde Lucio Antunnes (new)
Central African Republic Jules Accorsi (new)
Chad Sherif El Khashab
Comoros Manuel Amoros (new)
Congo Ivica Todorov
DR Congo Robert Nouzaret (new)
Djibouti (national team dormant)
Egypt Hassan Shehata
Equatorial Guinea Carlos Diarte
Eritrea Negash Teklit
Ethiopia Iffy Onuora (new)
Gabon Gernot Rohr (new)
Gambia Paul Put
Ghana Kwesi Appiah (caretaker)
Guinea Michel Dussuyer (new)
Guinea Bissau Luis Norton de Matos (new)
Ivory Coast Francois Zahoui (new)
Kenya Jacob Mulee (new, returns to post)
Lesotho Leslie Notsi
Liberia Bertalan Bicskei (new)
Libya Marcos Paqueta (new)
Madagascar Jean-Paul Rabier (new)
Malawi Kinnah Phiri
Mali Alain Giresse (new)
Mauritania Moustapha Sall
Mauritius Akbar Patel
Morocco Eric Gerets (new)
Mozambique Mart Nooij (re-installed)
Namibia Brian Isaacs (caretaker)
Niger Harouna Doulla
Nigeria Samson Siasia (new)
Rwanda Sellas Tetteh (new)
Sao Tome e Principe (national team dormant)
Senegal Amara Traore
Seychelles Andy Morrison (new)
Sierra Leone Christian Cole (new)
Somalia (national team dormant)
South Africa Pitso Mosimane (new)
Sudan Mohamed Abdallah (new, returns)
Swaziland Musa Zwane (caretaker)
Tanzania Jan Poulsen (new)
Togo Thierry Froger (new)
Tunisia Bertrand Marchand (new)
Uganda Bobby Williamson
Zambia Dario Bonetti (new)
Zimbabwe Madinda Ndlovu (caretaker)

Still waiting

A member of FIFA for five years, the southeast Asian state believes its first international victory is not far away

National pride...(from left) Jose Joao Pereira, Leonel and skipper Esteves line up before a 2008 AFF Cup qualifier against Brunei

EAST TIMOR

STEVE MENARY

EAST TIMOR COULD soon be staging home international matches in Darwin after Football Federation Australia (FFA) offered the Asian minnows the chance to play at the Marrara Stadium in the Northern Territory capital. And although one of FIFA's weakest teams, they would not be without support as many of the Timorese diaspora live in Darwin.

"FIFA money helped provide an artificial pitch to train on but [East Timor's] national stadium is not international standard and they have been playing [home] games in Indonesia," explains John Boultbee, FFA's head of development.

Since joining FIFA in 2005 the highlight for the former Portuguese colony – annexed by Indonesia in 1975, but which gained independence in 2002 – is a 2-2 draw with Cambodia in the 2008 AFF Cup qualifiers.

The competition is East Timor's most regular international outing and the 2010 qualifiers started with a 5-0 thrashing by the Philippines in October. Coach Pedro Correia de Almeida dropped six players for the next game, against Cambodia, and his team took a surprise lead through Chiquito Do Carmo before losing 4-2.

Coach...De Almeida

In their final qualifier, against Laos, Chiquito scored early again but their opponents' superior fitness showed in the second half as they romped home 6-1 – East Timor's 13th defeat in 14 AFF Cup fixtures.

"I truly believe we will win soon," says Alfredo Esteves, who won 11 caps for East Timor, scoring one goal. "We played very well in Cambodia [in 2008] and competed well in the other games. The goal difference wasn't so big like in years before.

"We have been improving technically and tactically, but what beat us was the lack of experience and the fatigue."

Esteves captained East Timor in 2008 and was included in the initial 2010 AFF Cup squad, only to be later dropped without explanation – a move that prompted the defender to quit international football.

His retirement was a big blow to Timorese football as the 34-year-old is also one of the few players with experience in the professional game.

Esteves was playing with Minnesota Thunder, in North America's United Soccer Leagues, when he was offered the chance to train with Sydney in February 2007. During his two-week trial, Sydney played against Wollongong Wolves and, after seeing out the remainder of that season in the USL, he was offered a contract by Wollongong and chose to play slightly closer to home.

Although he will not be playing in Darwin himself, Esteves believes the move could prompt exiled Timorese to make contact with the Federacao de Futebol de Timor-Leste (FFTL).

"There are a few players with dual nationality playing in Australia," he says. "Most of them never had the chance to represent the national team. Also the federation does not have resources to follow the players playing abroad and the budget to fly them over when we have to play."

National league

Before independence, East Timor staged a Prime Minister's Cup, plus a brief league that ran for two months but was subject to regular changes of format. The FFA is now working with the FFTL and the Asian Football Confederation to help develop a national league with teams from all 14 East Timor districts.

"Football is really popular and a national league is the ultimate aim but there are significant travel issues," admits Boultbee.

For all these obstacles, at youth level East Timor show real promise and the national Under-16 side qualified unbeaten for the 2010 Asian Championships. Although they lost all three matches in the finals in Uzbekistan, Japan could only beat them 1-0 – a result which raises hopes that a first victory at full international level is not far away. ●

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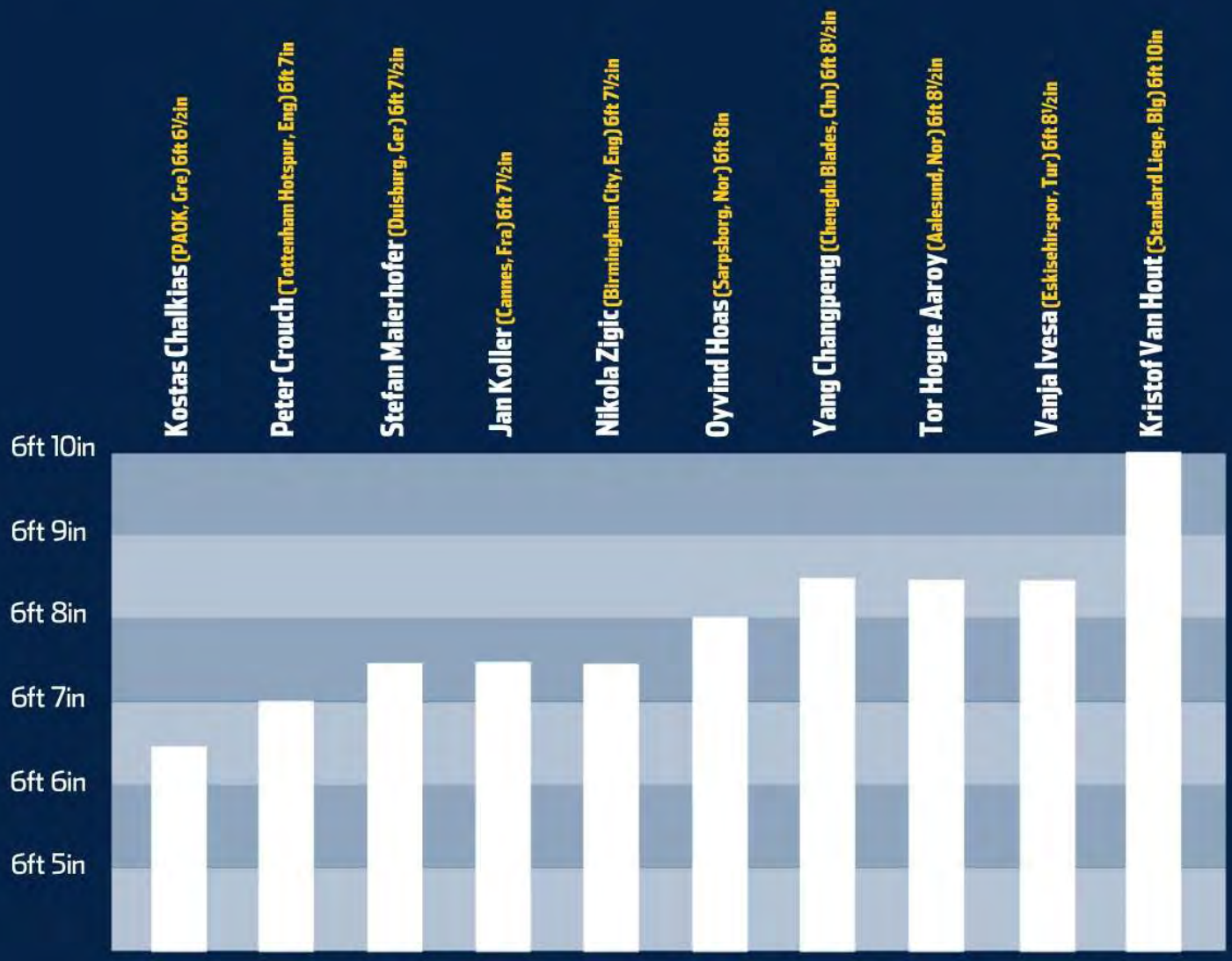

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in the world

Little and large...Standard keeper Van Hout stands 20in taller than River Plate winger Buonanotte, who is one of the smallest professionals in the world

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The next

In a special feature, *World Soccer* writers select the players who are expected to be the mainstays of their respective national teams for many years to come

ALBANIA

HAIR ZEQIRI

The 22-year-old Flamurtari Vlora midfielder combines teak-tough physical presence with cunning off-the-ball movement and high-quality finishing.

Comparisons...Boudebouz

ALGERIA

RYAD BOUDEBOUZ

The Sochaux attacking midfielder, 20, is often compared to Mustapha Dahleb, the great Paris Saint-Germain and Algeria dribbling machine. Whispers abound that Boudebouz regrets pledging himself to the north Africans rather than France, the country of his birth.

ANGOLA

KADU

Angola coach Herve Renard sprung a major surprise this autumn when he called up the 15-year-old Porto youth-team keeper for the national team despite zero pro experience.

ARGENTINA

ERIK LAMELA

Barcelona tried to sign him at the age of 12 and his introduction to the River Plate first team in September showed why. Tall, elegant left-footed 18-year-old midfielder with good passing skills and the capacity to launch a sudden dribble.

AUSTRALIA

LUKE DEVERE

An Australian Institute of Sport graduate, the 21-year-old Brisbane Roar centre-back looks set to succeed Craig Moore at the heart of the Socceroos' rearguard. His distribution needs to improve, however.

BELARUS

MAKSIM SKAVYSH

The striker, just turned 21, has that rare ability to both create and finish. A graduate of the famous BATE football academy.

Honours graduate...Skavysh

Progress...DeVere

BELGIUM

EDEN HAZARD

Real Madrid and Arsenal would love to sign Lille's hugely gifted 19-year-old playmaker, though Belgium coach Georges Leekens thinks him too nonchalant on the pitch.

BOLIVIA

SAMUEL GALINDO

Picked up by Arsenal and loaned to Salamanca in Spain after captaining Bolivia Under-20s at the unlikely age of 16. Now 18, a left-footed playmaker with good long-range passing.

Out on loan...Galindo

BOSNIA

MIRALEM PJANIC

No question about the 20-year-old's touch and creative instinct, but he has found it hard to follow in the footsteps of Juninho at Lyon.

generation

Controversial talent who attracts plaudits...and trouble

AUSTRIA
MARKO ARNAUTOVIC

FEW PROFESSIONALS today can match the 21-year-old Werder Bremen front runner for his ability to polarise opinion. Almost as if neutral judgments of him are strictly forbidden, you either worship at the altar of his elegance, vast array of tricks and shooting power, or demonise him for supposed chronic inconsistency, ill-discipline on and off the pitch and his disdain for the concept of the team.

Bought to the Bundesliga by Bremen from Twente last summer in a £6million deal, this Vienna-born son of a Serb father and Austrian mother certainly is a unique talent. A compelling combination of height, refinement on the ball and versatility – he can operate anywhere in the attacking third – he can, on a good day, cut the figure of the heir apparent to Eric Cantona and Zlatan Ibrahimovic. And, according to former Austria playmaker Andy Herzog, he has world-beater written right through him.

"I don't think there's any doubt at all about his class," says Herzog, Austria's most-capped player. "In the past 30 years we've had Krankl, Prohaska, Polster and myself, but Arnautovic has the potential to be even better."

The key word here, though, is "potential". Arnautovic may have been blessed with rare ability, but far too often he has not been in a position to fully exploit it, held back by his eccentric behaviour and bloody-minded insistence on doing it his way.

From his earliest days kicking a ball in the Floridsdorf district of north Vienna, he has lived up to the tag of "Marko the Maverick", an individual forever tied up in disputes and controversy. While in the schoolboy and junior ranks of a host of Viennese clubs – Floridsdorfer AC, Austria Wien, First Vienna and Rapid Wien – he drove his coaches to distraction with his bad behaviour and willfulness, and at Twente, who took a chance on the 17-year-old free spirit in 2006, he found himself at the eye of a discrimination storm, accused by Willem II midfielder Ibrahim Kargbo of racist insults. Arnautovic vehemently denied the charge and, after a Dutch federation investigation, the case was dropped – but damage was done to his reputation nonetheless.

And he has been up to his recidivist tricks since joining Bremen, ordered off the pitch by coach Thomas Schaaf for wildly disputing a decision during a training-ground practice match and generally irritating his team-mates with his stubbornness and arrogance. "He'll have to change his ways," scowled Bremen veteran Torsten Frings.

The last word goes to Jose Mourinho, who had Arnautovic under his wing at Internazionale on loan last season. He was rarely used but the Portuguese maestro does seem to have a soft spot for him. "He was a great kid, but with the mind of a child," says Mourinho. "He kept turning up for training three hours early. I found that remarkable."

Nick Bidwell

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Jewel...Tonev (left)

BULGARIA

ALEKSANDAR TONEV

CSKA Sofia have a jewel in this diminutive 20-year-old all-rounder who can line up on the wing, in a playmaking role or as a second striker. Can be hot-headed at times.

BURKINA FASO

JONATHAN PITROIPA

Lightning quick and extremely direct, though he needs to be more composed when he has the goal at his mercy. After initially making a name for himself at Freiburg in the Bundesliga, the 24-year-old striker is now at Hamburg.

CAMEROON

VINCENT ABOUBAKAR

Highly-talented 18-year-old striker who was the only home-based player in his country's World Cup 2010 squad. Often mentioned in the same breath as Samuel Eto'o, but on occasion drops too deep in search of the ball.

CANADA

NANA ATTAKORA

Twice voted the country's best under-20 player of the year, the Toronto centre-back of Ghanaian stock – who is now 21 – has represented the Maple Leaf nation at every level and would not be out of place in a European championship – all he needs is the chance.

CHILE

CARLOS LABRIN

Tough centre-back able to mark or sweep who has been in his club side Huachipato's line-up since 2008. A success for Chile at Under-20 level, the 20-year-old is now starting to receive opportunities with the senior side.

Tough...Labrin (right)

CHINA

ZHANG LINPENG

Central defender who made an immediate impact on his debut for China, scoring after being introduced as a second-half sub against Jordan. Has been compared to former Asian player of the year Fan Zhiyi.

COLOMBIA

JAMES RODRIGUEZ

Has made a slow start in Portugal with Porto, but was a sensation with Banfield in Argentina. Strong, talented, versatile left-footed midfielder who, at 19, will be expected to play a key role on home ground in the 2011 World Youth Cup.

Chance...Attakora

CONGO

DELVIN N'DINGA

At 22 the home-grown Auxerre defensive midfielder is one of the French top flight's most improved players and is benefitting enormously from a diet of Champions League football this season.

Improved...N'Dinga

CROATIA

IVAN PERISIC

Elegant, 21-year-old Club Brugge attacking midfielder in the mould of the former Croatia international Aljosa Asanovic. Invention and finesse in spades, though rather lightweight physically.

CYPRUS

GEORGIOS EFREM

Cultured right-winger who, after stints at the Arsenal academy and in Scotland with Rangers, returned to his native land at the start of last season to play for Omonia Nicosia. Beating his full-back is the easy part for the 21-year-old, though his crossing is not always 100 per cent.

CZECH REPUBLIC

VACLAV KADLEC

Eighteen year-old Sparta Prague striker considered his country's most exciting youngster since Tomas Rosicky in the late 1990s. Chelsea and Liverpool have been scouting him for quite some time, but would a place on a Premier League bench really be beneficial?

Santos teenager aiming to lose the "promising" tag

BRAZIL

NEYMAR

NEYMAR HAS BEEN singled out as a future great for almost half of his 18 years and made the cover of one of Spain's sports dailies when barely out of his teens. Even so, nothing could prepare him for the visibility he would achieve in 2010...and its consequences.

The previous year – his first in the Santos first team – went well enough, but with the side in mid-table, and his failure in the Under-17 World Cup, the fuss he created was minimal.

All that changed this year. Neymar shone as Santos won both the Sao Paulo state championship and the Brazilian Cup, and a powerful lobby pushed for inclusion in the World Cup squad. It did not happen, but he did not have to wait long for international action, scoring on his debut against the USA in Mano Menezes' first game in charge. Suddenly Neymar was everywhere, giving TV interviews and popping up endorsing products in the commercial breaks.

"I used to think that if you were famous you could do whatever you want, but it's the opposite," he now complains. "You can't do anything. In Santos I can't go out."

In September he showed that the imposition of limits was proving a problem. He had missed a succession of penalties and, when he was not allowed to take one against Atletico Goianense, he exploded, swearing at coach Dorival Junior and his team-mates. Rival coach Rene Simoes said: "I have never seen anything like it. Someone has to educate this boy, because we're creating a monster."

Dorival Junior argued that "an act of insubordination has to be punished; we need to take this opportunity to correct a kid who promises to be a football sensation". He pushed for a 15-day suspension – and, extraordinarily, found himself sacked as Santos chose to part company with their promising coach rather than do without their young star for two weeks. But Neymar paid a price too.

"Our way of doing things is very paternalistic," explains Menezes. "In our clubs we take great care to produce the player, but we don't produce the citizen. We do everything for the player, and for those who lack a good structure this probably transmits to them the illusion that they don't have to behave like a normal person, that they don't have to obey all the rules."

Menezes left Neymar out of his squad to face Iran and Ukraine in October, but in the following weeks the teenager did enough to persuade the national coach to bring him back for the friendly against Argentina in mid-November.

In January, Emerson Leao, the Santos coach when Robinho burst onto the scene, said: "Neymar is an improved version of Robinho. Robinho took time to have the ambition of scoring goals. He preferred to do tricks. Neymar quickly learned to be direct."

The teenager has borne out Leao's words and with four rounds of the Brazilian Championship to go he was the second-top scorer, his ability to glide past his marker on either side matched by his skill in guiding home shots off either foot – and, as he proved on his international debut, he can also score with his head.

Dorival Junior showed there are no hard feelings with a much publicised hug before Santos played against his current team, Atletico Mineiro. "On an inspired day," said Dorival before the game, "Neymar is unmarkable." Neymar then scored both Santos goals in a 2-2 draw.

His admirers argue that Neymar has already gone from "next big thing" to "new big thing" and the first half of 2011 will definitely put such claims under the microscope.

First, there will be pressure from the Brazilian Football Confederation for Neymar to participate in the South American Under-20 Championship, to be held in Peru in January and February. In addition to serving as the qualification tournament for the World Youth Cup, this will also decide which South American teams go to the London Olympics. The continent has just two places available and, given that Brazil see the Olympics as a vital halfway house on the way to the next World Cup, the pressure for a full-strength squad is understandable.

This is then followed by the Libertadores Cup, which will be a big international test for a young Santos side – and Neymar in particular. Then in July comes the Copa America in Argentina, which will be the youngster's first chance to win a senior title with Brazil.

If Neymar can keep shining through that schedule, the word "promise" will belong to the past.

Tim Vickery

Big year ahead...Neymar

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Dortmund teen ready to break through

GERMANY
MARIO GOTZE

NON-GERMANS LOOKING on with envy at the brilliant young crop of twenty-somethings (Thomas Muller, Mesut Ozil and Jerome Boateng) cutting a dash for the *nationalmannschaft* at the World Cup in South Africa will not be pleased to hear that the next wave of talent is already lapping onto the shores of the Bundesliga.

The likes of Mainz attacker Andre Schurrle, Gladbach winger Patrick Herrmann and full-back Bastian Oczipka at St Pauli all have immense promise, but none of this rising generation is shaping up as well as 18-year-old Dortmund creative midfielder Mario Gotze, who was called up into the national squad (along with Schurrle) for November's friendly against Sweden.

Dortmund boss Jurgen Klopp has used the whizz-kid in short bursts, taking care to bring him along gradually, but whenever Gotze has featured, he has always made a difference – so much so that when he is not on the pitch, the Ruhr side do not seem to play with the same pizazz. Not surprisingly for the son of an information-technology professor at Dortmund University, he plays with a rare intelligence in the heat of the battle. With a silky technique to die for, he can also do a soft-shoe shuffle through most defences and has an eye for goal. No wonder Dortmund were in a hurry this autumn to extend his contract to 2014.

His five-star display in Dortmund's 2-0 victory at Mainz, a win which put his team top of the table, had anyone privileged enough to see it open-mouthed in admiration. Only once in a blue moon do teenagers take a game by the scruff of the neck and call the shots from first to last, but that's what Gotze did on that particular afternoon, never wasting a pass, constantly punching holes in the opposition rearguard with his speed and dribbling ability, scoring one goal and setting up another for Lucas Barrios. "There's not many players of his age who can bring as much to the party as him," enthused Klopp at the final whistle.

Coaches at Dortmund have known they were in the presence of a prodigy from the moment he entered their academy as a nine-year-old. However, the media hype which surrounds him at the moment has served to destabilise many a boy wonder in the past and, as he himself admits, he still has several weak points to work on, not least his physique. Playing one game in every two is a sensible move for someone of his experience. Soon, though, he will have to deliver on a weekly basis.

Player of the tournament when Germany won the Euro Under-17 title last year, he is already a fixture for the Under-21s. Next stop Euro 2012? Don't bet against it.

Nick Bidwell

Expressive...Eriksen

DENMARK
CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN

The fact that Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has an eye on Ajax's 18-year-old says it all. Plays an expressive game which would fit right in at the Emirates but, like so many of Wenger's current squad, he is on the small side.

ECUADOR
JEFFERSON MONTERO

Made his name when Ecuador won their first trophy, the 2007 Pan-American Games, and was catapulted into the senior side. An attacking midfielder or support striker, at 21 he is now finding his feet with Villarreal.

EGYPT
AHMED SHOUKRY

Exuberant, risk-loving attacking midfielder whose left foot is the stuff of dreams. However the

Gold medallist...Montero

Trickery...Wilshere

21-year-old does have diva-like tendencies, hanging onto the ball too long and displaying a marked reluctance to track back.

ENGLAND

JACK WILSHERE

A rare English talent at Arsenal, where his range of passing, midfield trickery and combative tackling have earned the 18-year-old regular outings in the Champions League and a senior England debut from Fabio Capello.

ESTONIA

SANDER PURI

Tracked by Werder Bremen and Borussia Dortmund when with Levadia Tallinn, the 22-year-old winger opted to move to Greece where he is developing his game with Larissa.

FINLAND

ROOPE RISK

The 19-year-old Turku striker has a nose for goal, while his pace, positional sense and speed of thought make him a candidate for a rapid advancement into the senior national team.

FRANCE

YAYA SANOGO

Recovering from a broken leg, the 17-year-old Auxerre front man nonetheless remains one of the great hopes of French football. A regular scorer for his country at youth level, he started out at the same Parisian club as Thierry Henry – Les Ulis.

GABON

BRUNO ECUELE MANGA

Totally focused and resilient central defensive marker whose career has taken off since Bordeaux rejected him a couple of years ago. Not surprisingly he is still a little raw – before signing for Lorient this summer from Angers the 22-year-old had never set foot in top-flight football.

Craft...Ayew

Resilient...Ecuele Manga

Character...Ananidze

GEORGIA

JANO ANANIDZE

Diminutive midfield orchestrator who showed his character by cancelling his study at Dynamo Kyiv academy when they refused to release him for a training camp with the Georgia youth team. Now at Spartak Moscow and already in the senior Georgia side at just 18.

GHANA

ANDRE AYEW

After an impressive loan spell at Arles-Avignon and a decent World Cup tour of duty with the Black Stars this summer, the 20-year-old is now back at his parent club Marseille, where coach Didier Deschamps swears by his dynamism and craft on the right-flank. As the son of ex-Ghana and Marseille great Abedi Pele, he has a lot to live up to.

GREECE

SOTIRIS NINIS

Since bursting onto the Hellenic scene at the age of 16 in 2007, the Panathinaikos midfield creator or right-winger has had his ups and downs. Talented but has been held back by bouts of inconsistency and repeated injuries.

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Headline-grabbing striker has key role under new coach Prandelli

ITALY
MARIO BALOTELLI

THOSE INTERNAZIONALE FANS who did not see Mario Balotelli score his first two Premier League goals in Manchester City's 2-0 away win at West Bromwich Albion probably smiled wryly to themselves when they read the match report. As so often in the past, Balotelli was both villain and hero of the hour since not only did he win the game for City but he also managed to get himself sent off.

Like it or not, where there is 20-year-old Balotelli, there is often controversy. Some of the polemics are of his own doing, linked to an apparently unorthodox, if not to say undisciplined, attitude. Undoubtedly, though, some of the polemics have a much more serious basis, namely the latent racism of a vocal minority of Italian fans.

The "discipline" problems are well known. Throughout his two years at Inter, Jose Mourinho regularly found fault with his attitude, accusing him of not pulling his weight in training. Inter fans recall with no small amusement how the police recorded him doing over 60mph on the small country road that leads to Inter's La Pinetina training ground in the foothills of the Alps.

If it is true that Balotelli has not always helped himself with his headstrong attitude, it is also true that he has encountered problems not of his own creation. Born in Palermo to a Ghanaian couple, he was abandoned as a baby in a hospital in the Brescia area. Having spent most of his first two years in an institution, he was formally adopted by the Balotelli family from Concesio in the province of Brescia in 1993 and brought up along with two brothers and one sister.

As a black player, however, he has repeatedly been the object of racist abuse from opposing fans. In particular, he became a "*bete noire*" for Juventus fans after scoring twice against Juve as a 17-year-old in an Italian Cup quarter-final in January 2008.

So strident were the racist chants aimed at Balotelli during a game in April 2009 that Juventus ended up with a sanction ordering them to play a subsequent Serie A game against Atalanta behind closed doors.

At the time, Balotelli showed a deal of common sense, dismissing the chants and commenting afterwards: "I'm more Italian than those idiots."

It is also true, however, that Balotelli has not always gone out of his way to endear himself to opposing fans. For example, during Inter's 3-3 home draw with Roma, in March 2009, he appeared to make a provocative gesture to the Roma fans, inviting them to be silent after he had scored a much-contested penalty.

The anti-Balotelli feeling reached ridiculous proportions one weekend in November last year when he managed to "attract" ugly chants at two different matches being played hundreds of miles apart. At both Inter's away game in Bologna and, even more perversely, during Juve's home game with Udinese, he was once more the object of sporting, if not racist abuse: "*Se saltelli, muore Balotelli*" (if you jump up and down, then Balotelli dies)

Even when Juventus travelled to Bordeaux for a Champions League group game last autumn, the anti-Balotelli chant went with them. On that particular occasion, it required the intervention of Juve goalkeeper Gigi Buffon to convince the fans to adopt other more acceptable chants. So when Balotelli declares that he feels himself "more Italian" than idiotic racist fans he is not merely mouthing empty words. In August 2007, before he had made his Serie A debut, he rejected an approach by Ghana saying that he wanted to play for Italy.

He had to wait another three years for the first call-up which finally came this August when Italy coach Cesare Prandelli signalled the dawn of a new era by naming him in his first squad, for a friendly against the Ivory Coast in London. The point here, of course, is that following Italy's disappointing World Cup in South Africa, one of the accusations most frequently levelled against previous coach Marcello Lippi was that he had left out of his squad the two most talented Italians of the moment: namely, Balotelli and Antonio Cassano.

Among those to attend the West Brom-Man City game was Prandelli himself. Word was that he had "pardoned" Balotelli for his red card and intended to name him for Italy's November friendly with Romania.

Prandelli knows only too well that, at a difficult moment like this, Italy's footballing future lies at the feet of a player like Balotelli.

Paddy Agnew

Flair...De Jong (left)

HOLLAND
SIEM DE JONG
Attack-minded Ajax midfielder with a flair for making well-timed late runs into the penalty area and finishing like ex-Amsterdammer great Jari Litmanen. However, the 21-year-old urgently needs to compete in a more taxing European League.

HUNGARY
BALAZS DZSUDZSAK
Flying Magyar left-winger who has been a proven source of goals, assists and raised excitement levels for the best part of three years at PSV Eindhoven. Inexplicably, the 23-year-old has not yet hit the same heights with Hungary.

ICELAND
GYLFI SIGURDSSON
Attacking midfielder with double helpings of vision, technique, drive, accuracy of shot and dead-ball skills. Now 21, he has enjoyed an outstanding past 12 months, scoring spectacular goals for Reading and Iceland's Under-21 side, and landing himself a £5.4million move to Germany's Hoffenheim.

IRAN
KARIM ANSARIFARD
Groomed for success at the Saipa club by Iran legend Ali Daei, he scored on his international debut and is one of the hottest properties in the domestic league. Daei attempted to sign him for his current club, Persepolis, but was told the 20-year-old was not for sale.

ISRAEL
GAI ASSULIN
Great things were expected of the impudent attacking midfielder when he was at Barcelona's academy, La Masia, only for him to fail to make the pro breakthrough and be released this summer. Manchester City are on the 19-year-old's case...which may seem a case of jumping from the frying pan to the fire.

Fan club...Traore (right)

IVORY COAST
LACINA TRAORE
Based in Romania with champions CFR Cluj, the giant striker certainly has a sizeable fan club these days, with the list of admirers including Liverpool, Arsenal and Bayern Munich. The 20-year-old has pace, strength and skill, but altruism is not one of his qualities.

KENYA
MCDONALD MARIGA
Despite the central midfielder's considerable assets, his lung-power, athleticism, bite in the tackle and tactical awareness, he is being squeezed out of the first-team picture at Internazionale. At 23 he suffers from the same syndrome as Liberia's George Weah in having to carry the national team.

Settled...Hernandez

Bite...Mariga

JAPAN
SHINJI KAGAWA
The 21-year-old midfielder has been one of the stars of Borussia Dortmund's run to the top of the Bundesliga table this season following a summer move from Cereza Osaka

Impressive...Kagawa

and some impressive performances at the World Cup in South Africa.

LATVIA
JEVGENIJS KOSMACOVS
Big-hearted and tactically-aware defensive midfielder with a penchant for shooting from distance. Currently with Ventspils, the 22-year-old probably needs to move to a bigger league to fulfil his potential.

MEXICO
JAVIER HERNANDEZ
The 22-year-old "Chicharito" has settled in marvellously at Manchester United following his £7million switch from Guadalajara. But with Wayne Rooney and Dimitar Berbatov ahead of him in the striking pecking order, will he get enough playing time?

MONTENEGRO
STEVEN JOVETIC
Although just 21, the Fiorentina playmaker has few peers when it comes to ball control and imagination. He is, however, currently sidelined after damaging cruciate ligaments.

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MOROCCO

ADEL TAARABT

The quintessential moody flair player, the 21-year-old playmaker has shown both faces of his persona during his time in England: sulky and selfish at Tottenham Hotspur, imperious and eye-catching at second-tier pace-setters Queens Park Rangers.

NIGERIA

RAMON AZEEZ

Brilliant from first to last at the 2009 under-17 world championship, this energetic and skilful midfielder could be just what the Super Eagles' doctor ordered after their World Cup debacle this year. When he decides to leave the Future Pro Academy, the 17-year-old must choose carefully, prioritising matchday action over the glitter of the address.

NORTHERN IRELAND

CORRY EVANS

Elder brother Jonny, also a centre-back, has been in the Manchester United first-team squad for three years but expect younger sibling Corry, 20, to rise even higher in the Old Trafford hierarchy. On loan at Carlisle United for the moment, he recently scored the winner in Northern Ireland's Euro 2012 qualifying victory in Slovenia.

Super Eaglet...Azeez

NORWAY

HARMEET SINGH

Complete box-to-box midfielder of Indian descent who has shone for Norway in every category from under-15 to under-21. Now 20, he was singled out for praise by Barcelona boss Pep Guardiola after a friendly against Singh's club, Valerenga, this summer.

Sibling rivalry...Evans

Talent...Szczesny

PARAGUAY

RODRIGO ALBORNO

The tall, well-built midfielder with the booming left foot is still only 17 but has already scored important goals for his club, Libertad, and is set to be a key player at the forthcoming South American Under-20 Championship in Peru.

Pocket rocket...Avila

PERU

IRVEN AVILA

Tiny, skilful, nippy striker with surprising penalty-area presence. Has enjoyed two excellent goalscoring seasons with Huancayo and, at 20, will surely soon be on the move to a bigger club soon.

POLAND

WOJCIECH SZCZESNY

Arsenal's third-string goalkeeper is arguably more talented than his two supposed betters (Manuel Almunia and compatriot Lukaz Fabianski). But will the 20-year-old stay patient?

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

DARRON GIBSON

Athletic and strong-running Manchester United midfielder whose forte is his remarkable long-range shooting. A full Republic international despite being born in Northern Ireland, the 23-year-old may eventually have to leave Old Trafford for regular first-team football.

United wing wonder has come of age at last

PORTUGAL

NANI

LESS THAN a year ago, Portugal's wing wizard Nani looked to have no future whatsoever at Manchester United. The native of Cape Verde, an £18million purchase from Sporting Lisbon in the summer of 2007, spent his first two-and-half years at Old Trafford irritating virtually everybody with his excessive individualism, poor body language, bad decision-making and inconsistency. When, in November 2009, he complained to a newspaper in his homeland that manager Alex Ferguson did not pick him for the big games, he seemed to have booked himself a seat on a Gulag Archipelego-bound wagon.

But no. United somewhat surprisingly kept faith in him and Nani suddenly burst into life in the second half of last term, consistently tearing opposition rearguards to shreds, and especially to the fore in the 3-1 win at Arsenal in the Premier League and in the second leg of the Champions League quarter-final against Bayern Munich, in which he scored twice as United won 3-2.

It was almost as if United had signed themselves a new player. To the thrill-a-minute core of his game – the pace to burn, the two-footed shooting, the trickery, the love of a one-on-one duel – he had added two entirely new strings to his bow: the concept of teamwork and a greater effectiveness in front of goal. In football terms the boy had become a man.

The Nani renaissance, which has continued apace this term, is not hard to understand. He is very much a confidence player, and on feeling wanted and appreciated by United he responded with brilliance and verve in equal measure. Equally crucial was Ferguson's decision to switch him from the left flank to the right. His right foot is his stronger and when operating on the left he often appeared to be a little less free in his execution, needing time to steady himself before crossing. On the right, however, everything flows – the feints, the shimmies, the incisiveness.

Not that he has smoothed out all the rough edges. Perhaps inevitably for someone whose stock in trade is flair and the mood of the moment, he can disappear from view at times and does himself no favours either with his tetchiness and tendency to dive for ill-gotten advantage. Nani's reputation for gamesmanship now precedes him in English football circles and it would be such a shame if he allowed the gratuitous tumbles to overshadow the fastest of quick feet.

Nick Bidwell

ROMANIA

GABRIEL TORJE

Few young Romanian players can match the speed and verve of the 21-year-old Dinamo Bucharest winger, who is a blur when he gets into his stride. His only major problem is his fondness of the nightlife.

Self-critical...Dzagoev

RUSSIA

ALAN DZAGOEV

The CSKA Moscow attacking midfielder has no discernible weaknesses, allying creativity, finishing, dribbling and rather unexpectedly, industry. Very single-minded and serious, the 20-year-old does, however, tend to be overly self-critical.

SCOTLAND

DANNY WILSON

Young Scottish talent is thin on the ground at the moment but the 19-year-old defender moved from Rangers to Liverpool in the summer for a fee of up to £5million. A Scotland Under-21 regular, he was both players' and football writers' young player of last season.

SENEGAL

MAME BIRAM DIOUF

Recruited by Manchester United from Norwegians Molde early this year, the 22-year-old striker did not waste any time making an impact, scoring on his home debut. But the competition is intense at Old Trafford and it is a matter of debate whether he will retrace his steps at the end of his current loan spell at Blackburn Rovers.

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The Arsenal captain – still only 23 – is the obvious successor to Xavi

SPAIN
CESC FABREGAS

WHEN BARCELONA began their barely disguised pursuit of Cesc Fabregas this summer, there was one question that probably got asked more than any other: why?

Why did Barcelona chase him so hard? What was the point? Did they even need him? Where was he going to play?

It was hard to see where Fabregas would fit into the Barcelona midfield plan as he isn't really suited to the Sergio Busquets role and no one in their right mind would replace Xavi Hernandez or Andres Iniesta. As if to prove the point, Spain won the World Cup – without the Arsenal skipper starting a single game, but with Iniesta, Xavi and Busquets as irreplaceable members of the side.

Yet everything soon became clear. And, just as importantly, it suggested an answer to another big question: what next for the national team?

On the day that Vicente Del Bosque named his squad for Spain's games against Scotland and Lithuania in October, there was one striking absentee: Xavi had been left out. He had not had a break in three years – playing a central role at Euro 2008, the 2009 Confederations Cup and in South Africa in 2010 – and he had taken part in an average of five-and-a-half games per month, without a break, since early 2007. He was also struggling with an Achilles injury.

As Del Bosque put it: "Xavi told me he was screwed", to which Xavi added: "I simply couldn't carry on."

Nobody lasts for ever, not even the man who is arguably the finest midfield player that Spain has ever produced.

Barcelona are well aware of that. In fact, that realisation underpinned Pep Guardiola's determination to sign Fabregas. In the future, he will; maybe even in the very near future.

Although they are not exactly the same type of midfield player, no one is better qualified to take over Xavi's role than Fabregas. Both are products of the same La Masia youth academy, which is almost evangelical about its commitment to a certain type of football. As Xavi puts it: "We are all sons of the system".

For Spain this summer, Xavi was even pushed a little further forward with two midfielders behind him – Busquets and Alonso – and that's an area which is very much Fabregas' domain, even though he insists that he can also be the pace-setter, the metronome in the middle.

It may seem a bit bizarre to earmark Fabregas as one for the future – players included in such lists are normally lesser-known footballers, kids on whom you take a punt. But at 23 he has already played in two World Cups and a European Championship, collected over 50 caps and captains one of the world's biggest clubs.

And it is not as if he has not played a key role for Spain already as he got the winning penalty in the quarter-final against Italy at Euro 2008, provided a sumptuous assist in the semi-final and started in the Final. In fact, a case could be made for saying that, even from the bench, he was one of the tournament's outstanding players. He also provided the pass for Iniesta to score the winner in Johannesburg this summer.

But if it is superficially bizarre, it is also logical. And realistic. Yes, there are plenty of young players who look set to play important roles for Spain, but none seem likely to play a role as central as Fabregas. It is one he is desperate to play too, and even Spain's success couldn't hide a degree of personal frustration at his peripheral status at the World Cup.

Meanwhile, he was the one bone of contention that Spaniards had with Del Bosque – most wanted to see far more of the Arsenal midfielder.

There is another factor too. Because he has been around for so long, one of the things that is often forgotten is just how young he is – and how much more he still has to offer: another two European Championships and one World Cup at the least.

Before this summer's World Cup, Fabregas was asked what he envisaged in the future. The question was designed to draw a response on Barcelona's interest, but he batted it away saying: "I see myself lifting the World Cup."

He meant Spain winning in South Africa but as a statement of intent it would fit a bigger picture.

Sid Lowe

Appreciated...Ljajic

SERBIA
ADEM LJAJIC
Manchester United's decision late last year to pull out of a deal to sign the right-winger from Partizan Belgrade left his Premier League dreams in tatters. But the 19-year-old has rebounded excellently at Fiorentina, where his ability to take on and beat a man are much appreciated. The slower pace of the Italian game suits him.

SLOVAKIA
VLADIMIR WEISS
Currently on a season-long loan at Rangers from Manchester City, the 20-year-old runs like the wind and can trick his way out of the tightest of spots. However, team play and overall awareness remain concepts.

SLOVENIA
RAJKO REP
This technically dazzling and goal-hungry Maribor midfielder is the hottest property in the Slovenian game at the moment. Wanted by Ajax, Palermo, Fiorentina and Napoli, the 20-year-old reads the game well and is a dependable team man, though he will need to bulk up his physique somewhat to play at a higher level.

SOUTH AFRICA
DAYLON CLAASEN
One of the new faces in the *Bafana Bafana* line-up this season, the 20-year-old midfielder was allowed to leave Ajax for Belgian side Lierse, but is nevertheless a good prospect. Think Everton's Stephen Pienaar with not quite so much savoir faire.

SOUTH KOREA
JI DONG-WON
Chunnam Dragons' 19-year-old forward has impressed with his form in the K-League, which earned him a call-up from national coach Cho Kwang-rae for the recent friendly against Nigeria. Injury ruled him out of that game but his future is bright.

Youngest...Soder (right)

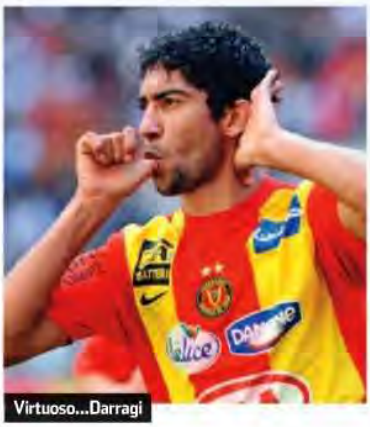
SWEDEN
ROBIN SODER
Two years ago the Gothenburg striker became the youngest player ever to turn out for Sweden Under-21s at 17 years and 157 days, and he would be further down the road to the senior side if he had not suffered a serious knee injury at the European Under-21 finals last year.

SWITZERLAND
NASSIM BEN KHALIFA
The gifted front runner or attacking midfielder demonstrated his mouth-watering repertoire in Switzerland's triumph at the Under-17 World Cup last year. However, the 18-year-old has found first-team opportunities at a premium since leaving Grasshopper for Wolfsburg in the close season.

Tricks...Weiss

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
KEVIN MOLINO
Willowy but skilful 20-year-old central midfielder with an eye for goal. Idolises Liverpool and England's Steven Gerrard, but unfortunately lacks his hero's physical presence.

TUNISIA
OUSSAMA DARRAGI
The 23-year-old's nickname of "Picasso" says everything you need to know. The Esperance playmaker and captain is a footballing artist, a virtuoso on the ball and stylish finisher. Paradoxically he has yet to flourish totally with the national team.


Virtuoso...Darragi

TURKEY
ARDA TURAN
Since 2006, he has ducked, weaved and generally produced left-wing magic for Galatasaray and the national team. But to make the most of his talent and reach the next level, the 23-year-old probably needs to seek a new big-name foreign posting.

Next level...Arda

UAE
AHMAD KHALIL
Asia's young player of the year in 2008 – a period in which he underpinned his nation's triumph at the continent's Under 19 championship with six goals. Al Ahli's 19-year-old front runner is often compared to Samuel Eto'o for his pace and technical skills. Preferring to play off a target man, he has to develop the ability to lead the line on his own.

worldmags

Spurs star winning plaudits across Europe

WALES
GARETH BALE

"TAXI FOR MAICON" rang the chant around White Hart Lane. Tottenham Hotspur fans, still blinking at their Champions League progress, taunted Internazionale's full-back, who had been humiliated by Gareth Bale in a memorable 3-1 victory over the European champions. In an electric performance on the left flank, Bale had provided perfect assists for Spurs' decisive second and third goals, having rampaged past the Brazilian all night.

"Bale is phenomenal," Maicon acknowledged. "We knew what he could do, but he was impossible to control."

Praise for the young Welshman that night came from no less a figure than Luis Figo, now on the back-room staff at Inter. "Figo said that Bale is amazing, just amazing," Spurs boss Harry Redknapp announced afterwards. "When Figo says that, he has to be good because he was such a fantastic footballer himself. He said: 'He killed us twice.'"

It was the second time in as many weeks that Bale had taken on Inter single-handedly. In Milan, his second-half hat-trick had threatened to complete a remarkable comeback after Spurs had found themselves 4-0 down at half-time and reduced to 10 men.

Bale's emergence at the highest level of the European club game marks a complete turnaround in fortunes for the Cardiff-born 21-year-old, who joined Tottenham in the summer of 2007 from Southampton for an initial £5million. In September 2009, he ended an unwelcome sequence in which he had appeared jinxed, having played in 24 league games for Spurs without being on the winning side.

Comparisons with Theo Walcott, a teen contemporary at Southampton, are inevitable. But while Walcott has struggled to impose himself physically on games, Bale has bulked out into an outstanding athlete.

Bale has also been toughened up mentally by Redknapp, who instructed his medical staff to ignore Bale in training in a bid to encourage the player to stay on his feet.

Bale's increasing confidence has not affected him in other ways. "He's a down to earth lad," says Redknapp. "I gave him a few days off after the game in Milan. I said go abroad. He did, he went to Cardiff and stayed with his mum. That's the sort of boy he is."

Redknapp believes Bale's final position will be at left-back, but whether that will be for Spurs remains to be seen. Redknapp insists Tottenham are not a selling club, but he may struggle to resist a top-level offer.

Along with prodigious Arsenal teenager Aaron Ramsey, Bale is likely to form the backbone of the Welsh midfield for the next decade. "He's the best player to come out of Wales since Ryan Giggs," says Redknapp.

Gavin Hamilton

UKRAINE
YEVHEN KONOPLYANKA

Exciting 21-year-old left-winger who plays for Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk and made his debut for the national team earlier this year against Lithuania.

URUGUAY
SEBASTIAN GALLEGOS

Came through the ranks at Danubio and scored freely for Uruguay at under-17 level, cutting in from the left onto his stronger right foot. Now 18, he has been picked up by Atletico Madrid and plays up front for their B team.

USA
ANDY NAJAR

Nimble 17-year-old DC United winger recently voted MLS rookie of the year. Born in Honduras but settled with his family in Virginia four years ago. The USA/Honduras tug-of-war for his services is a distraction.

UGANDA
IBRAHIM JUMA

Already a domestic star with league champions Bunamwaya at the tender age of 17, the attacking midfielder boasts an astonishing palette of gifts: a delicate touch, bags of ideas, an eye for goal and free-kick mastery. English Premier League clubs are watching him closely.

VENEZUELA
YOHANDRY OROZCO

Right-sided striker and a member of the 2009 World Youth Cup squad who has since made good progress, scoring goals for club side Zulia and, at 19, being blooded in the senior Venezuela side.

ZAMBIA
EMMANUEL MBOLA

Precociously talented left-back with top Congolese club TP Mazembe. Rumours abound that he is en route to the Premier League, but Mazembe officials are hopping mad they have been kept out of the loop. A messy business and not in the best interests of the 17-year-old.

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worldmags

Case for the defence:
3-5-2 rears its ugly head again

Three's a crowd?

Jonathan Wilson explains how a meeting of the top two in Argentina demonstrated how a back three can acquire points, if not plaudits

Breaking away...Velez Sarsfield striker Martinez (left) eludes Estudiantes wing-back Mercado for once

ESTUDIANTES IS A CLUB built on pragmatism, and if Alejandro Sabella's side go on, as they should, to win the apertura, it will be a success rooted in the best traditions of the club. Such is the focus on local rivalries in Argentina that on a weekend of five *clasicos*, the second versus first clash between Velez Sarsfield and Estudiantes at the end of October passed by almost unnoticed... and that may not be a bad thing.

A promised tactical battle between Velez's fluid 4-3-1-2 and the traditional 3-4-1-2 of Estudiantes soon faded into predictability.

With a three-point lead over Velez, Estudiantes came for a goalless draw with a 3-4-2-1 set-up and, apart from one headed chance for Juan Manuel Martinez, there never seemed any possibility they wouldn't get it.

As a defensive tactic it worked. The game was crushingly dull and, for Sabella, that was job done.

A couple of years ago it seemed the back three had run its course, undone by the general shift to single-striker formations. Play three central defenders against a lone centre-forward, the logic ran, and instead of having two markers and a spare man – as when the system emerged in the mid-80s – you had a marker, a spare man and another player who was redundant. Not only that, but the other advantage 3-5-2 and its variants had over 4-4-2, that it also overmanned three-on-two in the centre of midfield, is negated against a 4-3-3 or a 4-2-3-1. If the wing-backs find themselves pinned back marking wide forwards then not only does the side playing 3-5-2 have no width, but the opposing full-backs are left free to rampage at will.

> **"In Argentina there is a romanticism about football. Teams who defend tend to be both frowned upon and successful"**

Apologists for 3-5-2 suggest one of the spare defenders can push up into midfield. That is true, and it is what Egypt's Hany Said has done consistently while playing for his country over the years during their domination of African football. But it is also true that Egypt have found it

harder against sides who play a lone striker, and it is only recently that 4-4-2 has ceased to be the universal default in Africa – as was illustrated in the Nations Cup in 2008 when Egypt won 4-2 (and it should have been more) against a Cameroon side playing 4-4-2 in the group stage then limped to a 1-0 victory over the same side playing a 4-2-3-1 in the Final.

And if a centre-back is going to end up playing as a midfielder, why not just play a midfielder anyway?

Intriguingly, Barcelona and Mexico have both recently taken the opposite approach, fielding a deep-lying midfielder – Sergio Busquets and Rafael Marquez, respectively – who drops in to become a third centre-back as the two full-backs push forwards.

Sides playing with three centre-backs continue to prosper in Argentina because a lot of other sides also play with three at the back, and even those that don't still stick to the basic template of 4-3-1-2. There is an overt romanticism about the football; an insistence on the necessity of an *enganche* – literally a "hook" between midfielder and forwards; essentially a playmaker – and attacking football. Teams who defend tend to be both frowned upon and successful.

Velez's 4-3-1-2 is a little different. Their usual playmaker Maximiliano Moralez has a tendency to pull left, with Santiago Silva – a shaven-headed beast of a centre-forward – and Martinez shuffling across to form a 4-3-3. That allows them to be a little more direct than most Argentinian sides – who feel a need to play through the *enganche* – and, it seemed, gave them the perfect shape to get behind Estudiantes' two wing-backs, Gabriel Mercado and Marcos Rojo. That would either create crossing opportunities – particularly dangerous given Silva's aerial ability – or force the wing-backs back, stripping Estudiantes of attacking width and forcing them to cede midfield.

That wasn't how it worked out, though. To start with, Moralez was injured and replaced by Ricardo Alvarez. He tried to pull left, but the understanding with Silva and Martinez wasn't there – he probably didn't get far enough forward – and, as yet, he lacks Moralez's natural spark. More significant, though, was the approach of Estudiantes. Far from being pinned back, they sat back. The whole of the line of four stayed deep, which meant there was always a block of seven players for Velez to try to battle their way through.

Rojo and Mercado spent most of their time preventing the two Velez full-backs, Fabian Cubero and Emiliano Papa, from breaking forwards. Rather than one of the three centre-backs being left redundant, there were two markers to pick up Silva and Martinez, with one spare for when Alvarez broke through, plus the two holding midfielders, Leandro Benitez and Rodrigo Brana, offering additional cover. Gabriel Penalba and Enzo Perez, operating as a double-*enganche* in the most defensive sense, then played off Gaston Fernandez in a 3-4-2-1, meaning there was always a sufficient attacking threat to Velez simply piling forward and swamping Estudiantes.

Tedious game

The use of three at the back as a purely defensive tactic emerged at the World Cup. Uruguay had played with a back three only three times in 18 qualifying games, but coach Oscar Tabarez fielded a 3-4-1-2 against France in their opening game in South Africa, with the same notion of nullifying his opponents' front three and preventing the opposing full-backs getting forward. Again, for the neutral viewer, the effect was a tedious game, but Tabarez had identified – wrongly as it turned out, given the implosion in the French camp – that France would be the toughest game of their group and therefore targeted a point, which he secured with relative comfort despite a late red card.

Algeria, similarly, employed a defensive back three successfully against England, while New Zealand did it in all three of their games and North Korea did it with some success against Brazil (and rather less in their other two games). This re-emergence of the back three has been part of a general shift towards reactive football, a trend continued through Rangers at least in the Champions League.

It may not produce thrilling football, but Estudiantes have shown it can be extremely effective. ●

October 23, 2010, Argentinian Primera Division: Velez Sarsfield 0 Estudiantes 0

Velez 4-3-1-2

Estudiantes 3-4-2-1

June 11, 2010, World Cup finals, group A: Uruguay 0 France 0

Uruguay 3-4-1-2

June 18, 2010, World Cup finals, group C: England 0 Algeria 0

Algeria 3-4-2-1

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BILBAO The clubs, the history, what to see, how to get there

Basque

Peterjon Cresswell visits the largest city in the autonomous community of northern Spain

BILBAO, the cradle of the Spanish game, is home to Athletic – the flagship club of the industrious northern port, a throwback to the century-old origins of the domestic game and a figurehead of Basque pride.

While the likes of Barcelona and Real Madrid throw around fortunes to lure the best talent in the world, Athletic earned their considerable fame by fielding only native Basques. Not only have they never been relegated, they have won the Spanish title eight times and lifted the Spanish Cup on 23 occasions.

Currently sitting comfortably in La Liga, the Lions have somewhat relaxed their Basque-only policy and these days they will also field players who have direct Basque ancestry or who have been brought through the ranks at a Basque club.

Tradition, though, is what Athletic is all about. After the game was introduced to Bilbao in the late 19th century by British miners and dockyard workers, local students met at the Cafe Garcia to found a new club. Choosing an English name, Athletic, and wearing red-and-white striped shirts in possible deference to Sunderland, early managers included a certain "Mr Shepherd" and Billy Barnes, before Wolverhampton-born Fred Pentland oversaw the club's most successful era shortly before the Spanish Civil War. Their ground, San Mames, was opened in 1913, laid with English turf and, with a roaring crowd packed close to the pitch, is known locally as *"La Catedral"*.

Basque clubs dominated the Spanish Cup in the early days and one of Athletic's leading strikers at the time was Rafael Moreno, known as "Pitxitxi" or "Pichichi" (little duck). The scorer of 200 goals in 170 games, he was to die aged 29 and it is in his honour that

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Flying the flag...a fan in traditional Basque beret whips up support before Athletic's La Liga clash with Barcelona at San Mames

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Water music...Bilbao's parade takes to the river Nervion after the double triumph of 1984

Spain's top league goalscorer is still known as "El Pichichi".

The early 1930s were the club's glory years. The 12-1 defeat of Barcelona remains a record loss for the Catalans, while Athletic won the league four times in seven seasons and lifted the cup for four successive years.

Despite a dictat from General Franco that the club be given the more Hispanic name of Atletico, Bilbao continued to shine in the 1940s. Their forwards Zarra, Panizo and Agustin Gainza won silverware at home and led Spain to fourth place in the 1950 World Cup. Zarra was simply prolific, finishing Pichichi six times and bagging 252 league goals – still more than any other player, Di Stefano and Raul included.

Hard to compete

Although the Lions won the double in 1956 and were the first club to represent Spain in the European Cup, Athletic soon found it hard to compete with the top foreign stars being signed by Real Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. While they remained difficult to beat – not least when the legendary Jose Angel Iribar began setting a world-class example that other Basque goalkeepers would follow – but San Mames saw little silverware for over a decade. A revival came after the death of Franco in the mid-1970s. Reverting to their old name of Athletic, the red-and-whites rode a wave of Basque pride to challenge the big boys once more and made it to the 1977 UEFA Cup Final. Shortly before that Final, Iribar and the captain of fellow Basque side Real Sociedad strode out together on derby day carrying the Basque flag.

While rivals Sociedad began hiring foreign stars, Bilbao stuck to their guns and appointed Basque-born, ex-Athletic star Javier Clemente to usher in the club's most successful spell in recent decades. However, the team that won consecutive titles and the 1984 double were renowned for their aggressive defensive style – personified by Andoni Goikoetxea, the so-called "Butcher of Bilbao". His hatchet job on Barcelona's Diego Maradona nearly ended the Argentinian's career, leading to a feud between the clubs that culminated in a brawl at the 1984 Cup Final.

Amid a succession of big-name foreign coaches – Guus Hiddink, Jupp Heynckes, Howard Kendall – it was France World Cup star Luis Fernandez who took advantage of a more relaxed policy in hiring players to take Bilbao to second place in the league in

THE STADIUM

SAN MAMES
The country's oldest stadium can hold almost 40,000 people and has twice been renovated, most recently to host games at the 1982 World Cup. As the stadium approaches its centenary, it will be knocked down in 2013 and replaced by the San Mames Barria, which is being built alongside the current stadium and is due to open exactly 100 years after the original's inauguration.

1998. The club made their Champions League debut with players who had been nurtured in the Basque country – Ismael Urzaiz leading the line and netting chances created by precocious midfielder Julen Guerrero, who was offered a record salary to stay at his one and only club during his illustrious 40-cap career.

Despite these positive steps in the lucrative modern era, Bilbao fell back with Guerrero's emotional retirement and the ill-advised rotational policy of incoming coach Felix Sarriugarte. The club even flirted with

"Goikoetxea's hatchet job on Maradona led to a feud with Barcelona"

relegation but gained public favour by extending their transfer policy, bringing in Jonas Ramalho, their first coloured player, whose mother is a Basque.

Promising starts by youngsters Javi Martinez, Markel Susaeta and Francisco Yeste coincided with an appearance in the Europa League and plans for a new stadium – the San Mames Barria, to be set beside the original San Mames exactly a century after its inauguration. ●

Big game hunter...Bilbao's Fernando Llorente shields the ball from Barcelona's Sergio Busquets

BILBAO SURVIVAL GUIDE

Basque beauty

● ARRIVAL & TRANSPORT

Bilbao Airport is eight miles from town and connected by Bizkaibus line 3247 which runs every 20 minutes to Plaza Moyua. A taxi to town should cost about €20. The metro and tram systems (www.cotrabi.com) covers all bases and an all-zone, one-day pass on the tram is €4. Creditrans (€5, €10 and €15) can be used on the metro, trams and buses.

● HOTELS & INFORMATION

The tourist office (Paseo del Arenal 1, 94 479 5760, www.bilbao.net) provides information. Hotel Miro (Alameda de Mazarredo 77, 94 661 1880, www.mirohotelbilbao.com, €175) is close to the Guggenheim Museum, as is the Gran Hotel Domine (Alameda de Mazarredo 61, 94 425 3300, www.granhoteldominebilbao.com, €250). The two-star Hostal San Mames (Luis Brinas 15, 94 441 7900, €40) is modest but comfortable and next to the stadium.

● EATING & DRINKING

Bilbao is Spain's gastronomic capital with all types of places to eat. A favourite is the cider house (*sidreria*), where you pay a set price for char-grilled meat and cider. Another popular way to eat is by hopping from one tapas bar to the next. Most are found crammed into the narrow streets of the Siete Calles. Firm fixtures on local menus are *merluza* (hake) and *bacalao* (cod), accompanied by *txakoli* (a sparkling white wine). One of the best restaurants is in the Guggenheim Museum (94 435 9333). Pozas, the area between the San Mames and the next metro station to town, is packed with bars, as is the Casco Viejo. Beer is served in fat glasses and chased with the local spirit of pacharran. Gauxtxori is a typical Casco Viejo bar full of football talk.

● DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT

The Guggenheim Museum (Avenida Abandoibarra 2, 94 435 9080, www.guggenheim-bilbao.es) is Frank Gehry's titanium-clad masterpiece. The central shopping area is Plaza Moyua.

● MATCH DAY

There are two main Athletic supporters' groups: the Herri Norte, who congregate in the lower north stand and the Abertzale Sur, and the Tripustelak, who occupy the south stand. Neutrals are best placed in the lower east stand. Tickets (from €36) are available from the *txarteldegi ofiziala* (main ticket booths) or BBK cashpoints. Stadium tours (€6) are available. The stadium has a metro stop of the same name, three stops from the main hub of Abando.

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

● San Mames
Dec 12 Athletic Bilbao v Espanyol
Jan 2 Athletic Bilbao v Deportivo La Coruna
Jan 16 Athletic Bilbao v Racing Santander

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MEMORIES

BILL SHANKLY

worldmags

Conscience of Anfield

Brian Glanville on the legendary Liverpool manager

BILL SHANKLY played in the first professional football match I ever saw. It was January 1942 at Wembley, I was 10, and Scotland's wing-halves against England were Shankly on the right and Matt Busby on the left.

Needless to say, neither name meant anything to me at the time. Nor could either of these two gifted footballers – Shankly, then of Preston North End, and Busby of Liverpool – have had an inkling that both were destined to become outstanding managers: Shankly of Liverpool, Busby of Manchester United. For the record, England won easily, 3-0.

Born in 1915 and brought up amid the south Ayrshire coalfields, Shankly – like Busby – escaped the mines by moving as a teenager across the border into English football. While Busby made his name with Manchester City, Shankly had a 16-game season with Carlisle United, until Preston snapped him up in 1933. He would go on to play 296 league games for North End and twice appear in the FA Cup Final: on the losing side in 1937 against Sunderland and on the winning side versus Huddersfield Town in 1938.

His international career with Scotland was limited to five pre-war caps, but he made numerous other appearances during the hostilities when no caps were awarded.

Shankly retired as a player at 34, which he later felt was too early, and began his managerial career with his old club Carlisle, followed by Grimsby Town, Workington and Huddersfield.

It was his spell at Huddersfield which engendered one of the myriad anecdotes which peppered his career. One day, after training, he produced two sets of jerseys – one blue, one white – announcing that they were respectively for a five-a-side match between Scotland, for whom he would play, and England. Mike O'Grady, a young, quick left-winger who was a future England player, swept past him easily to score. Then he did it again. On the third attempt he was scythed to the ground with Shankly snarling at him: "Do that again and I'll break your bloody leg!"

Liverpool appointed him in December 1959 when they were a Second Division club and he proceeded to transform them, not least through an inspired transfer policy which brought talented players to Anfield for a minimal outlay. The jewel in the crown had to be Kevin Keegan, a £35,000 buy from Scunthorpe United and destined twice to become European Footballer of the Year.

Shankly was perhaps no great strategist; his teams thrived on talent and urgency, and it was not until 1973, when they lost in the European Cup to a technically and tactically superior Red Star Belgrade, that he sat down with his fellow coaches, among them future managers Bob Paisley and Joe Fagan, to devise a more gradual and, ultimately, highly successful mode of playing.

Though ever ebullient and inspirational, he could also be a martinet and was renowned for refusing to speak to his players when they were injured. "He can treat you like dirt," left-back Alec Lindsay once told me.

> "On a freezing cold winter's night he was to be found sitting with his wife in the directors' box of a minor northern club watching the game. When asked why, he was said to have replied: 'It's her birthday'"

Shankly's commitment to the game was almost pseudo-religious. He was famous for once saying: "A lot of people say football's a matter of life or death, but it's more important than that." Apocryphally or not, it was also told that on a freezing cold winter's night he was to be found sitting with his wife in the directors' box of a minor northern club, watching a game. When asked why, he was said to have replied: "It's her birthday." When later taxed with the story, he said: "No, I think it was our anniversary."

Shanks had his own sometimes bizarre way of looking at things. When Liverpool, in December, 1966, met Ajax in Amsterdam in the first leg of a European Cup tie, they crashed, admittedly in thick fog, 5-1. Afterwards he memorably remarked: "That's terrible. A team playing at home and it plays defensive."

Shankly, to his profound disappointment, would never win the European Cup, though Bob Paisley, who followed so self-effacingly in his dramatic footsteps, would do so again and again. Shanks was once asked if he was jealous. "Damn jealous," he honestly replied, but he it was who had so splendidly prepared the way for such triumphs.

Suddenly, almost shockingly, in August 1974, months after Liverpool had won the FA Cup again, Shankly resigned saying he was tired, even though few really believed him. Some suggested it might have had something to do with possibly baseless worries about his financial future. He would die, a saddened man, in 1981.

"I never had much education," he was wont to say. "So I've had to use my brains." Which he did so impressively. ●

FROM THE ARCHIVES April/May 1974

AS Bill Shankly neared the end of his managerial reign at Anfield, Eric Thornton wrote in *World Soccer:* "William Shankly, by all the graces, may finally decide to turn a broad back on the removal man and continue spending the rest of a tremendous soccer life as an Anfielder. That's great news for Merseyside, and has been made possible by the board wisely recognising fantastic services over the last 15 years with the offer of a new contract for life.

"It could provide a mighty and approving choir of adulation from the famous Kop, which has for so long idolised this architect of a club plucked from almost mediocrity and developed into a world power. Everything depends, however, on Nessie, the better half. The boss himself says: 'I need to talk it over with her, and she'll have the last word.'"

Bill booked for life at Anfield

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WORLD SERVICE

THE ULTIMATE GLOBAL NEWS AND RESULTS SECTION

Glory, glory

Internazionale's central defender Walter Samuel feels the full force of Peter Crouch (left) and Tom Huddlestone as Tottenham Hotspur take on the holders in the Champions League at White Hart Lane. More information, page 100

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ANGOLA

Cup delayed

This year's COSAFA Cup, which was scheduled to take place in Angola from November 13 to 17, has been postponed until 2011 due to what the Council of Southern African Football Associations described as the failure of the Angolan government to honour an earlier commitment to stage the event.

BAHRAIN

Second chance

Salman Sharida will lead Bahrain at the Asian Cup in January. Sharida, who was briefly in charge of the Bahrain national team once before, replaces Austrian coach Josef Hickersberger, who quit after just four months in the job and has returned to his previous employers, Al Wahda in the United Arab Emirates.

Signing off...Nobilo

BENIN

Nobilo no more

French coach Jean-Marc Nobilo has left his post as head of the Benin national team.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Record goal haul

Darly Batista scored five goals – four in a 12-minute spell – as the Dominican Republic beat the British Virgin Islands by a CONCACAF record 17-0 in the Caribbean Championship.

IRAN

Goodbye Ghotbi

Afshin Ghotbi will leave his post as national coach after the 2011 Asian Cup in January. The Iranian FA dismissed rumours that ex-Barcelona and Galatasaray boss Frank Rijkaard would take over.

RESULTS

CARIBBEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

1st round

Group A

CARIBBEAN CH'SHIP – 1ST RND: GP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Puerto Rico	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Cayman Is	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Anguilla	3	1	0	2	4	8	3
Saint-Martin	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

Group B

CARIBBEAN CH'SHIP – 1ST RND: GP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Kitts & N*	3	1	2	0	6	2	5
St Vincent & G*	3	1	2	0	8	1	5
Barbados*	3	1	2	0	6	1	5
Montserrat	3	0	0	3	0	16	0

**Group positions decided on head-to-head record, then overall goal difference*

Group C

In Paramaribo, Suriname

Oct 13
Guyana 1 (Bourne 9)
St Lucia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Davis (T&T)

Oct 13
Surinam 2 (Ives Vlijter 37, Aloema pen 90+1)
Dutch Antilles 1 (Pauletta 81)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Willett (A&B)

Oct 15
Dutch Antilles 2 (Delando pen 74, Kunst 84)
Guyana 3 (Peters 15, Abrams 45, Moore 57)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Matthew (SKN)

Oct 15
Surinam 2 (Rijssel 14, Ives Vlijter 38)
St Lucia 1 (Z Polius 77)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Baptiste (Dca)

Oct 17
St Lucia 2 (Z Polius 7, 36)
Dutch Antilles 2 (Trenidad 30, Anastatia pen 89)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Willett (A&B)

Oct 17
Surinam 0
Guyana 2 (Moore pen 17, Millington 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Davis (T&T)

CARIBBEAN CH'SHIP – 1ST RND: GP C – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guyana	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Surinam	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Dutch Antilles	3	0	1	2	5	7	1
St Lucia	3	0	1	2	3	5	1

Group D

In San Cristobal, Dominican Republic

Oct 14
Dominican Republic 17 (Batista 5, 67, 68, 72, 79, Peralta 22, 43, 77, Navarro 26, 47, 81, Reinoso 61, 73, Severino 64, Ozuna 82, 90, Frechilla 90+1)
British Virgin Islands 0
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Lebron (PR)

Oct 15
British Virgin Islands 0
Dominica 10 (Joseph 1, 12, 13, K Benjamin 47, 71, 81, 84, 85, C Bertrand 55, Jervier 87)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Santos (PR)

Oct 17
Dominican Republic 0
Dominica 1 (Derrick 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lebron (PR)

CARIBBEAN CH'SHIP – 1ST RND: GP D – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dominica	2	2	0	0	11	0	6
Dominican Rep	2	1	0	1	17	1	3
British Virgin Is	2	0	0	2	0	27	0

The four 1st round group winners and the two runners-up with the best record (Surinam and St Vincent & The Grenadines) qualified for the 2nd round

Byes to 2nd round:
Antigua & Barbuda, Cuba, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Trinidad & Tobago

2nd round

Group E**

In St George's, Grenada

Oct 22
Grenada 3 (K Bain 44, 68, R Charles 80)
Puerto Rico 1 (I Nieves 81)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Wijngaarde (Sur)
Sent off: Perrotte (Grenada) 45min; Perez (Puerto Rico) 66min

Oct 22
St Kitts & Nevis 1 (J Francis pen 83)
Guadeloupe 2 (Gendrey 13, Lambourde 87)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Taylor (Bar)
Sent off: Clavier (Guadeloupe) 26min; Byron (St Kitts & Nevis) 85min

Oct 24
Grenada 2 (Facey 17, 32)
St Kitts & Nevis 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)
Sent off: Lake (St Kitts & Nevis) 85min

Oct 24
Guadeloupe 3 (Gendrey 1, Gotin 11, Auvray 58)
Puerto Rico 2 (Megaloudis 65, Villegas 74)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Baptiste (Dca)
Sent off: Gotin (Guadeloupe) 34min

Oct 26
Grenada 0
Guadeloupe 3 (Tacita 2, 78, Gendrey 68)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Wijngaarde (Sur)

Oct 26
Puerto Rico 0
St Kitts & Nevis 1 (J Francis 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)

CARIBBEAN CH'SHIP – 2ND RND: GP E** – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadeloupe	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Grenada	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
St Kitts & N	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Puerto Rico	3	0	0	3	3	7	0

Guadeloupe and Grenada qualified for the final round (Nov 26-Dec 5, 2010), to which Jamaica and hosts Martinique qualified automatically

***Group E was the first of the three 2nd round groups to be played. Named sequentially, after the 1st round groups were called A, B, C and D*

AFF CUP

(ASEAN Football Federation – Association of South East Asian Nations)

Qualifying group

In Vientiane, Laos

Oct 22
East Timor 0
Philippines 5 (Araneta 27, 41, 57, P Younghusband pen 30, Del Rosario 32)
HT: 0-4

Oct 22
Laos 0
Cambodia 0

Oct 24
Cambodia 4 (Borey 26, 29, 40, Sinoun 75)
East Timor 2 (Chiquito 5, Anggison 85)
HT: 3-1

Oct 24
Philippines 2 (P Younghusband pen 76, J Younghusband 90+4)
Laos 2 (Soukhaphone 29, Kanlaya 41)
HT: 0-2

Oct 26
Philippines 0
Cambodia 0

Oct 26
Laos 6 (Kovanh 11, Soukhaphone 17, Lamnao pen 47, Konekham 59, Kanlaya 61, Ketsada 78)
East Timor 1 (Chiquito 9)
HT: 2-1

AFF CUP QUALIFYING GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Laos	3	1	2	0	8	3	5
Philippines	3	1	2	0	7	2	5
Cambodia	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
East Timor	3	0	0	3	3	15	0

Laos and the Philippines qualified for the AFF Cup finals (Dec 1-29, 2010), to which Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam qualified automatically

Finals match schedule

Group A

In Indonesia

Dec 1	Thailand v Laos (Jakarta)
Dec 1	Indonesia v Malaysia (Jakarta)
Dec 4	Thailand v Malaysia (Jakarta)
Dec 4	Laos v Indonesia (Jakarta)
Dec 7	Malaysia v Laos (Bandung)
Dec 7	Indonesia v Thailand (Jakarta)

Group B

In Vietnam

Dec 2	Singapore v Philippines (Hanoi, MD)
Dec 2	Vietnam v Myanmar (Hanoi, MD)
Dec 5	Singapore v Myanmar (Hanoi, MD)
Dec 5	Philippines v Vietnam (Hanoi, MD)
Dec 8	Myanmar v Philippines (Hanoi, HD)
Dec 8	Vietnam v Singapore (Hanoi, MD)

MD = My Dinh National stadium;
HD = Hang Day stadium

Semi-finals

Group A runners-up v Group B winners
Group B runners-up v Group A winners
1st legs - Dec 15/16; 2nd legs - Dec 18/19
(Ties to be played in the countries of the semi-final teams, on a home and away basis)

Final

1st leg - Dec 26; 2nd leg - Dec 29
(Ties to be played in the countries of the finalists, on a home and away basis)

FRIENDLIES

Wednesday, October 13

Oct 13 - Pune
India 3 (Al Dali og 21, Yadav 49, Surkurmar Singh 90+2)
Yemen 6 (Thabit 9, Baleid 28, Al Worafi 61, Al Sasi 77, 88, Basuhai 90+3)
HT: 1-2

Tuesday, October 26

Oct 26 - Panama City
Panama 0
Cuba 3 (Marquez 44, Coroneaux 45, 88)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Panama: Calderon - Parrish, Moreno, Rivera, McClean (M Gomez 53), Cooper (Renteria 61), Solis, Haywood (J Perez 87), Escobar (Phillips 7), G Torres (Buitrago 70), Aguilar (Nimbley 67).
Cuba: Castellanos - Francisco (Clavelo 88), Marquez, Y Colome (Dranguet 73), Quesada, J Colome, A Cervantes, S Fernandez, Urgelles, R Fernandez (Ramos 61), Coroneaux.

Wednesday, October 27

Oct 27 - Lobatse
Botswana 2 (Moloi, Thuma)
Swaziland 0

Friday, October 29

*Oct 29 - Willemstad**
Curacao (Dutch Antilles) **3** (Espacia, Trenidad, Steba)
Aruba 0
**Part of the ABCS Tournament, which featured a non-FIFA representative team*

Sunday, October 31

*Oct 31 - Willemstad**
Curacao (Dutch Antilles) **2**
Surinam 2 (og, Emanuelson)
Aet. **HT:** 0-2. **90mins:** 2-2
Surinam 6-5 on pens
**Final of the ABCS Tournament*

Asian Cup swansong...Ghotbi

ITALY

Victory awarded

UEFA awarded the *Azzurri* a 3-0 win after their Euro 2012 qualifier against Serbia in October was abandoned due to crowd trouble. Serbia must play two games (one of which is suspended) behind closed doors, while Italy were handed a suspended sentence of one game behind closed doors.

Former Juventus coach Ciro Ferrara, who was an assistant to Marcello Lippi when Italy won the 2006 World Cup, has taken charge of the national Under-21 team.

Trouble...Italy (in blue) v Serbia

NORTH KOREA

Asian U19 champions

Jong Il-gwan scored all three goals as North Korea beat Australia 3-2 in the Final of AFC Under-19 Championship. The youngster, who plays his club football with Rimyongsu, ensured his country's third title in this competition.

ZIMBABWE

Interim national boss

Madinda Ndlovu, who is now coach of Zimbabwean club side Black Mambas, has taken charge of the national side on an interim basis until new Belgian boss Tom Saintfiet is granted a work permit.

EURO 2012 QUALIFIERS

Standings on November 3

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	4	4	0	0	13	1	12
Austria	3	2	1	0	9	4	7
Turkey	4	2	0	2	6	6	6
Belgium	4	1	1	2	8	8	4
Azerbaijan	3	1	0	2	2	9	3
Kazakhstan	4	0	0	4	0	10	0

Next games
25.03.11 Austria v Belgium
25.03.11 Germany v Kazakhstan
29.03.11 Belgium v Azerbaijan
29.03.11 Turkey v Austria

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Rep Ireland	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Armenia	4	2	1	1	9	4	7
Slovakia	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Macedonia	4	1	1	2	4	4	4
Andorra	4	0	0	4	1	11	0

Next games
26.03.11 Andorra v Slovakia
26.03.11 Armenia v Russia
26.03.11 Rep of Ireland v Macedonia

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy*	4	3	1	0	10	1	10
Slovenia	4	2	1	1	7	3	7
Estonia	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
N Ireland	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Serbia*	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Faroe Islands	5	0	1	4	3	16	1

**UEFA awarded the Italy v Serbia game, abandoned because of trouble from the Serbian fans, as a 3-0 win to Italy*

Next games
25.03.11 Serbia v N Ireland
25.03.11 Slovenia v Italy
29.03.11 Estonia v Serbia
29.03.11 N Ireland v Slovenia

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	4	3	0	1	6	1	9
Belarus	4	2	2	0	3	0	8
Albania	4	1	2	1	3	4	5
Bosnia-Herz	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Romania	3	0	2	1	1	3	2
Luxembourg	4	0	1	3	0	6	1

Next games
25.03.11 Luxembourg v France
26.03.11 Albania v Belarus
26.03.11 Bosnia-Herz v Romania
29.03.11 Romania v Luxembourg

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	4	4	0	0	12	2	12
Hungary	4	3	0	1	12	4	9
Sweden	3	2	0	1	9	4	6
Moldova	4	2	0	2	5	3	6
Finland	3	0	0	3	2	6	0
San Marino	4	0	0	4	0	21	0

Next games
17.11.10 Finland v San Marino
25.03.11 Hungary v Holland
29.03.11 Holland v Hungary
29.03.11 Sweden v Moldova

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Greece	4	2	2	0	4	2	8
Croatia	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Georgia	4	1	3	0	3	2	6
Israel	4	1	1	2	5	5	4
Latvia	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Malta	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Next games
17.11.10 Croatia v Malta
26.03.11 Georgia v Croatia
26.03.11 Israel v Latvia
26.03.11 Malta v Greece
29.03.11 Israel v Georgia

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Montenegro	4	3	1	0	3	0	10
England	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Switzerland	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Bulgaria	3	1	0	2	1	5	3
Wales	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Next games
26.03.11 Bulgaria v Switzerland
26.03.11 Wales v England

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	3	3	0	0	5	2	9
Portugal	4	2	1	1	10	7	7
Denmark	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Cyprus	3	0	1	2	5	8	1
Iceland	3	0	0	3	2	6	0

Next games
26.03.11 Cyprus v Iceland
26.03.11 Norway v Denmark

GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	3	3	0	0	10	3	9
Czech Rep	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Scotland	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Lithuania	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Liechtenstein	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

Next games
25.03.11 Spain v Czech Republic
29.03.11 Czech Rep v Liechtenstein
29.03.11 Lithuania v Spain

The nine group winners and the runner-up with the best record (against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th in the respective groups) qualify automatically for the finals. The eight remaining runners-up will be drawn in four head-to-head, two-leg play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals. Co-hosts Poland and Ukraine qualify automatically

2012 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

Standings on November 3

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cape Verde	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Mali	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Zimbabwe	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Liberia	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

Next games
26.03.11 Cape Verde v Liberia
26.03.11 Mali v Zimbabwe

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Nigeria	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Ethiopia	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Madagascar	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Next games
26.03.11 Madagascar v Guinea
26.03.11 Nigeria v Ethiopia

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mozambique	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Libya	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Zambia	2	1	0	1	4	1	3
Comoros	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Next games
26.03.11 Libya v Comoros
26.03.11 Mozambique v Zambia

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cent Af Rep	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Morocco	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Tanzania	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Algeria	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Next games
26.03.11 Algeria v Morocco
26.03.11 Tanzania v Cent Af Rep

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal	2	2	0	0	11	2	6
Cameroon	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
DR Congo	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Mauritius	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Next games
26.03.11 DR Congo v Mauritius
26.03.11 Senegal v Cameroon

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Burkina Faso	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Gambia	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Namibia	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Mauritania withdrew before 1st round of games

Next game
26.03.11 Burkina Faso v Namibia

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Africa	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Niger	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Sierra Leone	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Egypt	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Next games
26.03.11 Niger v Sierra Leone
26.03.11 South Africa v Egypt

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Benin	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Burundi	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Rwanda	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Next games
26.03.11 Ivory Coast v Benin
26.03.11 Rwanda v Burundi

GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	1	1	0	3	0	4
Sudan	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Congo	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Swaziland	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

Next games
26.03.11 Congo v Ghana
26.03.11 Sudan v Swaziland

GROUP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	1	1	0	3	0	4
Guinea-Bissau	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Angola	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Kenya	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Next games
26.03.11 Guinea-Bissau v Uganda
26.03.11 Kenya v Angola

GROUP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Botswana	4	3	1	0	5	2	10
Tunisia	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Malawi	4	1	3	0	10	6	6
Togo	4	0	2	2	5	7	2
Chad	4	0	1	3	5	12	1

Next games
17.11.10 Botswana v Tunisia
17.11.10 Togo v Chad
26.03.11 Chad v Botswana
26.03.11 Malawi v Togo

The 11 group winners, the runners-up in Group K (the only five-team group) and the two other runners-up with the best record (against the teams finishing 1st and 3rd in the respective groups) qualify for the finals. Co-hosts Equatorial Guinea and Gabon qualify automatically

worldmags

CLUB WORLD CUP

Inter prepare to match Inter

Rotating his keepers...Internacional coach Roth

INTERNACIONAL were the last South American winners of the Club World Cup, but their 1-0 win over Barcelona four years ago was achieved with a game plan that acknowledged the superiority of their opponents. The only way they could compete with the European champions was to fight from a trench, break out to score and then hold on for grim life.

It has been the pattern of all the Finals since the competition began in 2005 – the exception being 2007, when Boca Juniors traded toe-to-toe with Milan and were beaten more comprehensively than the 4-2 scoreline would suggest.

However, there are hopes that this year there might be more of a balance between the champions of Europe and South America should they once more meet in the Final.

The 2010-model Internacional are a more expansive side than their 2006 predecessors, better able to take the game to Internazionale of Milan. They have built on their success by investing in their structure.

The Porto Alegre outfit, though, remain a selling club, with the philosophy of maintaining a competitive squad by producing potential stars and trading them to Europe.

Their two best recent products both headed across the Atlantic as soon as the Libertadores title was in the bag, midfielder Sandro to Tottenham Hotspur and striker Taison to Metalist Kharkiv of the Ukraine.

On subsequent evidence, the electric pace of Taison has not been replaced and the team are not the same without it. Coach Celso Roth has followed the trend for 4-2-3-1 – most usually with a line of Giuliano, Tinga and Andres D'Alessandro behind the striker. All are fine players; the neat Giuliano is a real promise, D'Alessandro has won a recall to the Argentina squad and Tinga has talent and experience. But the three of them all prefer the ball to feet.

Taison's pace gave the team the option of lengthening the game. In its absence, centre-forward Alecsandro has suffered, and the leading attacking option, the returning hero Rafael Sobis, has not rediscovered the form that made him such a prospect in his first spell with the club. The strength of young striker Leandro Damiao could be a variation on the counter-attack.

Another former favourite struggling in his second spell with Inter is keeper Renan, whose form has been shaky – so much so that Celso Roth has recently taken to rotating his keepers, to ensure that Lauro and Roberto Abbondanzieri are not short of match practice.

Renan was on the bench for the 2006 triumph against Barcelona. The only starting survivor is centre-back Indio who, at 35, is beginning to creak. And at 32, the physical capacity of midfielder Pablo Guinazu will also be tested.

At the club since 2007, the Argentinian Guinazu is a key player, whose reading of the game and dynamism make him the motor of the team, linking the play and – especially in tandem with his compatriot D'Alessandro dictating the rhythm.

He is one of a number of experienced players in the Internacional line up who fell short of expectations in Europe – in his case with Perugia in Italy and Saturn in Russia. Former Brazil left-back Kleber is a wonderful striker of the ball but was a disappointment in Germany and Switzerland, while captain and centre-back Bolivar has played in France, Sobis in Spain and Alecsandro in Portugal.

For all these players the chance to fight for the world crown is the high point of their careers. Should they meet in the Final, Internazionale will have more strength in depth but Internacional will have the edge in terms of motivation. It could be the most interesting clash in the tournament's short history.

Tim Vickery

Neat...Giuliano

Internacional are a more expansive side than their 2006 predecessors, better able to take the game to Internazionale

THE SCHEDULE

All matches to be played in Abu Dhabi, at either:
- **Mohammed bin Zayed stadium**
- **Zayed Sports City**

- **Dec 8:** Al Wahda v Hekari United
- **Dec 10:** Mazembe v Pachuca (1)
- **Dec 11:** Seongnam v Al Wahda or Hekari United (2)
- **Dec 14:** Winner 1 v Internacional
- **Dec 15:** 5th-place play-off: Loser 1 v Loser 2
- **Dec 15:** Winner 2 v Internazionale
- **Dec 18:** 3rd-place play-off
- **Dec 18:** Final

On their way...D'Alessandro (left) and Tinga celebrate during the Libertadores Cup semi-final against Sao Paulo

CLUB WORLD CUP THE TEAMS

Big chance...Al Wahda's Mohammed Al Sehhi (left) and Andre Luciano da Silva

Al Wahda
(Hosts)

The Abu Dhabi club are in the competition for the first time after winning the UAE league title earlier this year. Austrian coach Josef Hickersberger returned from coaching the Bahrain national side to replace Romanian coach Laszlo Boloni. They will look to the Brazilian duo of Fernando Baiano and Magrao to break the deadlock when they face Hekari in the first round.

Key player: Fernando Baiano, experienced Brazilian striker who has had spells in Germany and Spain.

Hekari United
(Oceania)

Semi-professional outfit from Papua New Guinea who sprung a major surprise by winning last season's Oceania Champions League (see Dispatches, page 42).

Key player: Solomon Islander Henry Fa'arodo, who has experience of Australia's A-League.

Internacional
(CONMEBOL)

The South American club champions are hoping to be the first South American side to triumph in the annual event since they won the trophy in 2006. Coach Celso Roth has lost key players, including midfielder Sandro, to European clubs since they beat Mexico's Guadalajara in August's Libertadores Cup Final, but their attacking game plan should be entertaining to watch.

Key player: Andres D'Alessandro, the Argentina midfielder has enjoyed a new leash of life since moving to Brazil.

Internazionale
(UEFA)

The European champions have undergone some key changes since beating Bayern Munich in May's Champions League Final in Madrid. Coach Jose Mourinho has been replaced by Rafa Benitez, who has blooded some talented youngsters, including Brazilian Coutinho and Frenchman Jonathan Biabiany. Many key figures remain, including Samuel Eto'o and Brazilian defenders Maicon and Lucio, but as a whole the team have struggled to adapt to Benitez's new tactical ideas.

Key player: Wesley Sneijder, the Dutch midfielder has been laid low by anaemia, but he remains the team's key orchestrator.

TP Mazembe
(CAF)

The Congolese outfit are the African club champions for a second year running after a comprehensive victory over Tunisia's Esperance in November. Success has been achieved without striker Tresor Mputu, one of the best young Africans still playing in Africa, who is sitting out a one-year suspension for attacking a referee last year. They will be hoping for an improvement on last year's performance in Abu Dhabi, when they lost 2-1 to Pohang Steelers.

Key player: Given Singuluma, Zambian striker who has a key role in the absence of the suspended Mputu

Pachuca
(CONCACAF)

Mexico's oldest club will be hoping it will be third time lucky in this competition after defeats in 2007 to Tunisia's Etoile Sportive, and to LDU Quito and Gamba Osaka in 2008. They qualified for this year's competition by beating fellow Mexicans Cruz Azul to win the CONCACAF Champions League. Ironically, the coach who oversaw the victory over Cruz Azul, Guillermo Rivarola, quit in August following a Mexican league defeat by the same opponents. New coach, the Argentinian Pablo Marini, is confident he can see off Mazembe and then take on Internacional.

Key player: Edgar Benitez, Paraguayan striker has weighed in with some crucial goals.

Seongnam
(AFC)

Despite being Korea's most successful club, with seven K-League titles, Seongnam were regarded as the weakest of the four Korean quarter-finalists who dominated this year's Asian Champions League. But strong performances culminated in victory over Iran's Zob Ahan in the Final. Coach Shin Tae-yong is now confident that his side can beat Al Wahda or Hekari to set up a meeting with European champions Internazionale.

Key player: Sasa Ognenovski, Australian defender who was named the best player in the 2010 Asian Champions League.

Outsiders...Hekari United

Motivated...Internacional

Strong...Internazionale

Returning...TP Mazembe

Third time...Pachuca

Successful...Seongnam

AFRICA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Mazembe triumph again

Comfortable...Mazembe celebrate in Rades, but all the hard work had been done in the first leg

TP MAZEMBE equalled the record for the biggest winning margin in an African Champions League Final with an impressive defence of their continental crown.

The club from Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo handed a comprehensive hiding to Esperance, effectively rendering the tie over after the first leg.

Mazembe's 5-0 home win over their Tunisian opponents equalled the record they set 42 years earlier against Etoile Filante of Togo.

This time, a 1-1 draw in the return match in Tunis meant they missed out on the overall record of an eight-goal winning margin in an African club Final, but it did not detract from the nature of their success.

Esperance, who have a long history of shenanigans in the Champions League and an even longer soundtrack of bitter moans over their treatment by referees, kept up a resounding cacophony in the first-leg thrashing.

Mazembe were awarded an early goal that Esperance tried to scramble back from over the line, but television replays clearly showed that the referee from Togo was correct in awarding Ngandu Kasongo's opening goal after 18 minutes.

There was a short halt in play as the protests reached near hysterical proportions, a scenario then repeated soon after when defender Mohamed Ben Mansour was red carded for an off-the-ball punch thrown at a Mazembe opponent.

Esperance made a swift substitution in a bid to shore up their defence and thereafter sought to limit the damage, though they did look sharp on the counter-attack and did have chances to equalise.

But a penalty for Mazembe just before the break effectively ended the Tunisian outfit's resistance and three more goals rained in after half-time to ensure a humiliating defeat.

Alain Kaluyituka converted the penalty, while Kasongo added his second and Zambian import Given Singuluma also scored twice.

Mazembe, whose colourful, charismatic and controversial patron Moise Katumbi is the governor of the mineral-rich Katanga province, had been beaten into second place by Esperance in the group phase but they were imperious in the Final, having sent out a strong warning signal with the effective way in which they dispatched JS Kabylie of Algeria in the semi-final.

Victory was also achieved despite the year-long suspension of talismanic forward Tresor Mputu, who was banned for attacking a referee during a regional tournament earlier in the year.

Esperance did attempt to talk up their chances of a miraculous recovery in the return leg and even went a goal up at the November 11 Stadium in Rades when their Ghana international defender Harrison Afful scored after team-mate Oussama Darragi scuffed his shot.

However, Esperance lost their heads in the celebration and Ayman Ben Amor was sent off for spitting at a Mazembe opponent.

Substitute Deo Kanda pulled Mazembe level in the 67th minute when he outran the home defence, but by then the contest had long been settled in the favour of the Congolese.

Mazembe have now won four Champions Leagues, the last two more than four decades after the opening pair. They are the first side to win back-to-back titles on two separate occasions.

Mark Gleeson

Equaliser...Kanda

Distraught...Esperance players struggle to contain their emotions

"Mazembe have now won four Champions Leagues and are the first club to win back-to-back titles on two separate occasions"

ASIA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

On their way...Cho Byung-guk (third from right) scores Seongnam's second goal in Tokyo

Seongnam back at the top

IT may have taken six long, hard seasons, but Seongnam Ilhwa finally wiped away the bitter disappointment of one of the most spectacular capitulations in the history of Asian football to return to the summit of the continent's club game.

Shin Tae-yong's South Korean side eclipsed Zob Ahan of Iran 3-1 in the Final of the Asian Champions League to lift a title that looked to be destined for the club's trophy cabinet back in 2004.

Australian defender Sasa Ognenovski and his centre-back partner Cho Byung-guk gave Seongnam a two-goal cushion before Mohammadreza Khalatbari pulled one back for Zob Ahan, only for Kim Cheol-ho to seal the win late on.

Seongnam's infamous second-leg loss against Al Ittihad on home soil six years – they were beaten 5-0 in the return fixture after winning 3-1 in Jeddah – saw the Saudis steal their title and leave a deep scar on the psyche of one of Asian football's more successful clubs.

Victory over Zob Ahan and qualification for the Club World Cup will go some way towards healing those deep wounds, even if – due to injuries and suspension – Shin was forced to play a less experienced side against the Iranians than he would have liked.

Shin, who won the title as a player in 1995 with Ilhwa and who was also part of the Seongnam squad that was on the receiving end of that bitter blow against Al Ittihad, has transformed the fortunes of the club in his two years at the helm.

The former international midfielder led the club to the Final of the Korean Cup and into the league play-offs last season during his first year back in South Korea after a spell coaching in Australia with Queensland Roar.

This term he has gone even further, steering Seongnam back to the top of the Asian club game while the club remains in the hunt for this year's domestic title.

"I have won as a player before and now as a head coach but I am happier tonight," said Shin after the Final. "As a player I had belief that we could become champions but since I became a head coach I did not think that I would ever have this opportunity to participate in a major tournament like this.

"So to become champion as a coach is twice as good as when I won as a player so I am very happy."

"Seongnam's defeat in the 2004 Final left a deep scar on the psyche of one of Asian football's more successful clubs"

Seongnam under Shin are some way removed from the star-studded team that he was an integral part of during a playing career that saw him win every honour in the Korean game.

The 2010 vintage took to the field featuring just one member of the squad selected by Huh Jung-moo for the World Cup finals in South Africa, but the experience of goalkeeper Jung Sung-ryong proved invaluable as the 25-year-old kept Zob Ahan at bay as the club from Eshfahan pushed for a second-half equaliser.

Shin was also deprived the services of several key players, including suspended striker Dzenan Radoncic, but in the end his young charges, allied to the creative talents of Colombian striker Mauricio Molina, proved too good for the tactically limited Iranians.

This was the second year in a row that the confederation had decided to play the Final in the Japanese capital of Tokyo, the idea being to provide a neutral venue in an attempt to replicate the formula that works so successfully in Europe.

But fans of Asian club side tend not to be prepared – or, perhaps, financially able – to travel the huge distances required in such a vast continent to support their teams and, as a result, the National Stadium was well short of its 55,000 capacity.

Tellingly, the experiment has been brought to its conclusion after just two years with AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam announcing recently that next year's decider will be hosted by one of the two finalists.

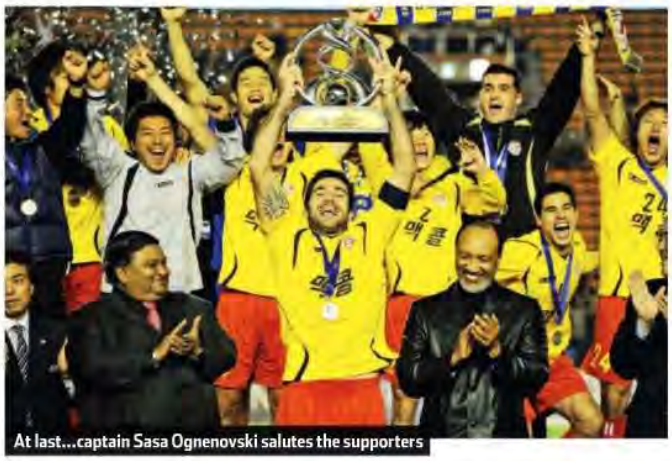
As it was, the crowd of just over 27,000 was dominated by yellow-shirted Seongnam fans prepared to make the relatively short journey from South Korea. Japan's National Stadium in Tokyo remains a favoured venue for K-League clubs as well, with Seongnam's victory coming just 12 months after their compatriots – and bitter rivals – Pohang Steelers claimed the same title in the same stadium to secure a place in the Club World Cup – just as Seongnam have.

"Our goal is just to do our best," said Shin of the impending challenge in Abu Dhabi.

"We will have the best players next month, so first of all, we will try to win the K-League, because my players gained a lot of confidence by winning the Champions League.

"We want to show the world that the level of Asian football is pretty high."

Michael Church



At last...captain Sasa Ognenovski salutes the supporters

ESTONIA Rookie Reim takes Flora to title

Under pressure...Levadia's Artjom Dmitrijev takes on Henri Erti (right) and Rauno Tutk of Tulevik

MEISTRILIIGA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flora (CL)	36	29	4	3	104	32	91
Levadia (EL)	36	26	8	2	100	16	86
Trans (EL)	36	23	7	6	67	31	76
Kalju	36	18	8	10	59	42	62
Sillamae	36	18	5	13	79	52	59
Tammeka	36	11	7	18	50	66	40
Tulevik	36	8	5	23	33	62	29
Paide	36	6	7	23	30	79	25
Kuressaare*	36	7	3	26	32	93	24
Lootus (R)	36	6	2	28	22	103	20

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: Ajax Lasnamae

**Kuressaare have a relegation/promotion play-off with Tamme Auto. The top two in the second tier, Levadia II and Flora II, were ineligible for promotion*

EUROPE'S second-most capped player of all time with 157 appearances for his country, former Flora captain Martin Reim was only offered the job of coaching his old team on the eve of the new season when Tarmo Ruutli left the club.

However, the 39-year-old's appointment proved to be a shrewd move as the club from the capital Tallinn won their first championship for seven years, despite suffering serious financial problems during the campaign.

"The most difficult moment was at the end of June when I had only two boys in training," says Reim of the time when several of his squad went on strike over unpaid salaries. Although the situation was eventually resolved, those wages came at a cost: five of the more established players, including long-serving defender Teet Allas, had to leave the club.

Even though Reim was forced to rely on a young squad, he was boosted by the return of 19-year-old Henri Anier and Sander Post (at 26, the side's oldest player) from loan spells at Italy's Sampdoria and in Holland with Go Ahead Eagles respectively. Post in particular was in inspired form, scoring a hat-trick in his first league game back in his homeland and finishing the season back in the national side and as the league's top goalscorer with 24.

Flora's title success – their seventh in total – ended city rivals Levadia's four-year monopoly and they beat the reigning champions twice in their four games to finish five points clear of the eventual runners-up.

Levadia did have something to celebrate against Reim's side, beating them 2-0 in the Super Cup and 3-0 in the Estonian Cup Final in May. Captain Konstantin Nahk was still less than impressed though, claiming: "It wasn't Flora who won the title, it was us who lost it. We punished ourselves by making unnecessary mistakes throughout the season.

"After our recent success, runners-up is a step back."

Flora president Aivar Pohlak, meanwhile, is only looking forward and he says he now wants to strengthen the team with the somewhat ambitious aim, considering the past season's money problems, of qualifying for the group stage of the Champions League.

Unfortunately, Flora's salary scandal wasn't the only negative story to come out of the Estonian top flight during the season as UEFA's programme to monitor gambling on games suggested that Trans early season defeats to Levadia and Lootus had been "clearly manipulated".

Andres Must

Unhappy...Levadia skipper Nahk

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
SANDER POST (Flora)
The league's top scorer, he scored six in a single game – against Lootus – and returned to the national side after an absence of five years.

COACH OF THE SEASON
MARTIN REIM (Flora)
Won the title in his first season as a coach under very difficult circumstances.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
EINO PURI (Levadia)
Former captain of the national Under-21 side who has now broken into the senior squad.

Trying circumstances...Reim

FINLAND Litmanen's Lahti drop out of the top flight

Snowed under...Jari Litmanen's team could not live up to his iconic status

IT may seem somewhat strange to begin a review of the season by focusing on the team that finished bottom, but when that team's leader, captain and part-owner is Jari Litmanen, there is little alternative.

Lahti were a poor team for most of the campaign and probably deserved to go down, but with them Veikkausliiga has lost its biggest star.

Litmanen's statue was unveiled outside Lahti's Kisapuisto ground – the team usually play at the ski stadium, but Kisapuisto is the spiritual home of football in Lahti – in October, a couple of weeks after his spectacular overhead kick in an away win at Oulu had been seen by over 600,000 people on YouTube. Nobody else in Finnish football can draw the same respect and media attention, not even Sami Hyypia with his slightly goofy endorsements and after 10 years with Liverpool.

Lahti are a "fusion club" and such teams often struggle to survive relegation in Finland. Litmanen, however, maintains that Lahti are the only Finnish fusion club to have worked properly – with junior development undertaken by Kuusysi and Reipas, the previous top clubs in the city – and has announced a budget of £600,000 for next season, which is double that of most other clubs in the division.

Lahti will be replaced in the top flight by RoPS, a northern club who built their squad around 12 foreign players because very few Finns actually want to live in Lapland. This influx has caused some resentment among many in Finnish football and the media, but the club claim they have little alternative and have built a highly effective unit around Zambia striker Nchimunya Mweetwa. RoPS don't spend money they don't have, they run a sustainable club supported by the whole town and the romance of football trips to Lapland is hard to beat.

The second-bottom Veikkausliiga club JJK Jyvaskyla won their relegation play-off against second-tier runners-up Viikingit. The tie followed a dismal season for JJK and a typical bridesmaid's year for Viikingit, whose side included two of the Sierra Leoneans who claimed asylum after the 2003 World Youth Championship in Finland. Hassan Sesay scored in the home leg, while Obi Metzger was, in coach Toni Korkeakunnas' opinion, Viikingit's most important player. Unfortunately he was injured for the away leg, which Viikingit lost 2-0 following a 1-1 draw in Helsinki.

The big surprise of the season was KuPS, who finished second and will now return to European competition, where in nine previous campaigns they have won just one tie. Miikka Ilo was named the league's best midfielder and he chipped in with seven goals as coach Esa Pekonen's team revelled in the strength in depth that they have lacked in recent years. Their squad was bolstered by six of the better foreigners in the league, an outlay made possible by investment banker owner Ari Lahti.

HJK won the title, again, and never really looked vulnerable. Their key men were Medo – until he left to join Partizan Belgrade – Rafinha, whose bombing forward from full-back was a potent weapon, and Juho Makela, whose awkward style overpowered many Veikkausliiga defences. Makela was the league's top scorer with 16 goals, while HJK's 21-year-old Juhani Ojala was voted the best defender.

The remaining European spots were taken by TPS Turku and Honka Espoo. Both clubs have vaunted youth policies and both suffered financial cutbacks last season. TPS managed to win the Finnish Cup, beating HJK 2-0 in the Final, despite losing Kasper Hamalainen to Djurgardens of Sweden in pre-season, while pre-season League Cup winners Honka faded badly after a decent start and again lacked a cutting edge. Their season was typified by a humiliating Europa League exit at the hands of Welsh part-timers Bangor City, and their attractive possession game was let down by too many defensive errors.

The Eremenko family continued their phenomenal contribution to Finnish football in general and FF Jaro in particular, with Alexei senior re-signing his son Alexei junior on loan from Metalist Kharkiv for the first half of the season. Players this good do not usually play in Finland at the age of 27, but a combination of the player's previous ill-discipline, his father's strict training regime and a change of coach at Metalist ensured he was allowed to get fit in Veikkausliiga. His class shone through, but it was not quite enough to get his dad's side into Europe.

Perhaps the most significant development this year was the FA's reorganisation of the league. The declared aim is to have a 12-team top flight playing each other three times and a 10-team second tier playing similarly, thus removing six teams from the top two divisions.

The announcement was handled with typical aplomb by the FA, their arrogance managing to annoy even those who thought the idea was fundamentally sound, but such a contraction of elite football in Finland is intended to concentrate scarce playing and financial resources in fewer clubs, leading to a rise in standards.

This is all to support the FA's stated aim of making Finland one of the top 10 countries in Europe by 2020 – a goal that looks increasingly distant as the national team's woeful performances continue.

Egan Richardson

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
MEDO (HJK)
Had become the fulcrum of HJK's midfield by the time he left to join Partizan Belgrade in August and HJK's chances of retaining the title next season will depend to a large extent on how they replace him.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ANTTI MUURINEN (HJK)
His main fault was considered to be his meek, polite demeanour, but this year he displayed a harder edge in winning a second successive title and now looks set to continue his reign at HJK into 2011.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ROOPE RISKI (TPS)
The striker's 12 goals in 18 Veikkausliiga games, added to the five in six he scored for Viikingit on loan at the start of the season, make him the most exciting forward Finland has produced in years.

VEIKKAUSLIIGA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK (CL)	26	15	7	4	43	19	52
KuPS (EL)	26	15	3	8	45	36	48
TPS (EL)	26	13	6	7	46	30	45
Honka (EL)	26	12	5	9	42	34	41
Jaro	26	11	5	10	42	34	38
Inter	26	10	7	9	34	32	37
Tampere	26	10	4	12	37	46	34
Haka	26	9	6	11	30	38	33
MyPa	26	7	11	8	36	39	32
VPS	26	8	7	11	29	40	31
Oulu	26	8	6	12	31	44	30
Mariehamn	26	7	7	12	38	43	28
JJK	26	8	3	15	34	41	27
Lahti (R)	26	5	11	10	26	37	26

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: RoPS

Strong...HJK defender Ojala (right)

LATVIA Skonto's successful return

Top of the table clash...Nathan Junior (left) of Skonto and Ventspils' Vladimirs Bespalovs

HAVING won the first 14 consecutive league titles since the Virsliga began in 1992, Skonto bagged their 15th crown to end a six-year drought.

The Riga club's change in fortunes coincided with the return in January of Aleksandrs Starkovs, who agreed to take the Skonto job in addition to coaching the national side. The 55-year-old had overseen all but one of those previous championships before leaving for Spartak Moscow in 2004.

"Obviously I'm happy to win the title once again," said Starkovs. "We worked hard throughout the whole year to reach our main goal and at last we can say we are champions.

"I believe our success is well-deserved. We had strong opponents in Ventspils, Metalurgs and Daugava. Each of them could have won the race, but we were better and luckier."

Skonto wrapped up the title with a 2-2 draw at home to runners-up Ventspils, who they finished six points ahead of in a campaign during which they only lost twice – including a home defeat to promoted Daugava.

Jelgava were also promoted last term and they rounded off a good season by beating second-tier FC Jurmala in the Latvian Cup Final. Goalkeeper Marks Bogdanovs was the hero of the hour, making three saves in the penalty shoot-out as Jelgava won 6-5 after drawing 2-2.

Jelgava were knocked out of the Europa League on their debut in continental competition by Molde of Norway, but they did have the compensation of winning their home leg 2-1 to become the only Latvian club side to register a win in European competition last year.

Cup runners-up FC Jurmala and Gulbene 2005 are promoted, replacing Jauniba and Tranzit, with the latter declining the chance to face FC Jurmala in a play-off to stay up.

Deniss Rakels of Metalurgs and Skonto's Brazilian Nathan Junior topped the scoring charts with 18 goals apiece, but the most noteworthy achievement was that of Olimps/RFS' Valerijs Sabala who became the youngest scorer in Latvian league history at the age of 15 years and 193 days. By the end of the season he was his team's top scorer with six.

Andres Must

VIRSLIGA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Skonto (CL)	27	22	3	2	86	16	69
Ventspils (EL)	27	20	3	4	68	18	63
Metalurgs (EL)	27	19	4	4	70	20	61
Daugava	27	16	8	3	35	16	56
FK Jurmala-VV	27	8	4	15	30	45	28
Jelgava	27	6	7	14	36	45	25
Blazma	27	7	3	17	27	57	24
Olimps/RFS	27	5	6	16	31	63	21
Tranzit (R)	27	5	4	18	17	56	19
Jauniba (R)	27	4	4	19	16	80	16

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: Gulbene 2005, FC Jurmala

Experienced...Zigajevs

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
JURIJS ZIGAJEVS
(Ventspils)
The winger had the best season of his career and, at 24, he is already one of his club's most experienced players.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ALEKSANDRS STARKOVS
(Skonto)
His return to the capital resulted in a first league trophy for the club in six years.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
DENISS RAKELS
(Metalurgs)
The 18-year-old was the league's joint-top scorer with every one of his 18 goals coming from open play.

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NORWAY Champions are unbeatable

ROSENBORG won an impressive 16th championship out of a possible 20 and completed the season unbeaten – the first time a Norwegian club has ever gone through a campaign without losing a single league game.

Coach Nils Arne Eggen, who took over in mid-season from Erik Hamren, completed the mission by adding even more attacking flair to the team. Criticised for being defensively naive, Eggen stuck to the positive approach, with the goals of Steffen Iversen and Rade Prica proving invaluable.

At 40 years of age, midfielder Roar Strand won his 16th league title. After playing 440 league games during his 20 years with Rosenborg, he has finally decided to hang up his boots.

The only challenge to Rosenborg's domestic dominance came from Martin Andresen's Valerenga, who were the big surprise of the season. Youngsters Harmeet Singh and Mohammed Fellah complemented the experience of Kristofer Haestad and Bojan Zajic in a creative midfield, while striker Luton Shelton was in terrific form up front.

The fact Mohammed Abdellaoue left Valerenga for Hannover in August cleared the way for others to shine and even his younger brother Mostafa chipped in with five goals as the team finished seven points behind Rosenborg in second place.

Per Mathias Hogmo introduced some exciting foreigners to the team in his second spell at Tromso, bringing in Brazilian centre-forward Kayke Rodrigues and Senegalese midfielder Serigne Kara, who both turned out to be positive acquisitions. Meanwhile, Ruben Yttergard Jensen and Tom Hogli broke into the national side.

Success...another trophy for Eggen

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ANTHONY ANNAN (Rosenborg)
The Ghana international was the driving force behind his side's dominance with his subtle play from a deep midfield role.

COACH OF THE SEASON
NILS ARNE EGGEN (Rosenborg)
The most successful coach in the history of the Norwegian league stepped in when Erik Hamren left the club to take over the Sweden national team, and Eggen kept the team on track for yet more honours.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MARKUS HENRIKSEN (Rosenborg)
The 18-year-old, who is the son of Rosenborg's assistant coach Trond Henriksen, scored important goals from midfield and is expected to become an important player for club and country in the future.

The negative aspect of Tromso's season was the fact that they only scored 36 goals – about half of what Valerenga managed.

Kjetil Rekdal took Aalesund to their best-ever league finish of fourth. The former national captain, who coached the team to victory in the Norwegian Cup Final last year, improved the side further this term and goalkeeper Anders Lindegaard is now a target for several large foreign clubs. At 6ft 8½in, giant forward Tor Hogne Aaroy again scored most of their goals and he is, naturally, a real handful in the air.

Newcomers Haugesund finished on a high under coach Jostein Grindhaug. The primary aim was survival but, amazingly, they found themselves fighting for fourth place until the very last day of the season, mostly thanks to strong home form and strikers Nikola Djurdjic and Thomas Sorum scoring a combined total of 23 goals.

Stromsgodset finished seventh but ended the season bywinning the Norwegian Cup Final, beating second-tier Follo 2-0 in the Final. The fact that Marcus Pedersen left for Dutch football in the summer meant Ola Kamara and Fredrik Nordkvelle had to make their mark up front. Youngster Jo Inge Berget also scored some important goals but he missed part of the season through injury.

Stromsgodset's last league match of the season turned out to be a thriller as they beat Lillestrom 5-4 at home. The visitors came from behind with an Anthony Ujah hat-trick and almost equalised in the last minute.

Viking, Stabaek and Brann had disappointing seasons. Brann have extended coach Rune Skarsfjord's contract and Viking will continue with Age Hareide, but Stabaek parted company with Jan Jonsson after five years and will now put their faith in another Swede, Jorgen Lennartson, coach of his country's Under-21 team.

Veterans Eirik Bakke and Cato Guntveit are leaving Brann, while Jan Gunnar Solli was expected to join New York in the MLS and Petter Vaagan Moen was set to join QPR. Brann will need to bring in replacements and hope that Erik Huseklepp stays.

Molde's season changed totally after coach Kjell Jonevret had to go and Uwe Rosler took over to save them from the drop. In eight matches Molde won six and drew two, taking 20 out of 24 points under Rosler's command.

However, despite saving the club from relegation, Rosler did not change his plans about moving to England at the end of the season and he will be replaced next term by Manchester United's reserve-team boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who will be welcomed home for the 100th anniversary of the club where he started his career.

Kongsvinger and Sandefjord were relegated and Honefoss were forced to take part in play-off matches with three teams from the second division.

Sogndal and Sarpsborg won automatic promotion.

Sigurd Odegaard

Sweet 16...veteran Strand retired after winning yet another league title

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg (CL)	30	19	11	0	58	24	68
Valerenga (EL)	30	19	4	7	69	36	61
Tromso (EL)	30	14	8	8	36	30	50
Aalesund	30	14	5	11	46	37	47
Odd Grenland	30	12	10	8	48	41	46
Haugesund	30	12	9	9	51	39	45
Stromsgodset (EL)	30	13	4	13	51	59	43
Start	30	11	9	10	57	60	42
Viking	30	10	11	9	48	41	41
Lillestrom	30	9	13	8	51	44	40
Molde	30	10	10	10	42	45	40
Stabaek	30	11	6	13	46	47	39
Brann	30	8	10	12	48	50	34
Honefoss*	30	7	6	17	28	62	27
Kongsvinger (R)	30	4	8	18	27	58	20
Sandefjord (R)	30	2	6	22	25	58	12

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: Sarpsborg, Sogndal

**Honefoss went into relegation/promotion play-offs with Fredrikstad, Lov-Ham and Ranheim*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND Rovers' title

AFTER leading the table for most of the season, a nervous Shamrock Rovers eventually pipped Bohemians on goal difference to be crowned league champions for a record 16th time and denying their Dublin rivals a third successive title.

Rovers went through a bad patch at the end of September and with two games to play it looked as though Bohs would achieve their hat-trick. In early October Bohemians went a point clear when they beat St Patrick's Athletic on the same day that Rovers lost at home to Sporting Fingal. But the reigning champions then lost at struggling Galway United, while Shamrock beat Drogheda United, which virtually ensured the title for Rovers. A point in their final game against Bray Wanderers was good enough for Shamrock but they made hard work of it before stumbling over the line.

It was Rovers' first championship win since 1994 and a lot has happened to the club since then. In the intervening 16 years Ireland's most famous club suffered relegation, before returning to the top flight and then ending a 20-year nomadic existence when they settled into a new ground in Tallaght, south Dublin, in 2009.

As usual with success stories, much of the credit goes to the manager, in this case Michael O'Neill. The former Northern Ireland international was a surprise choice when he moved to Dublin from Brechin City in December 2008, but he immediately raided his former club for striker Gary Twigg, who has topped the goalscoring charts in the Republic for the past two seasons, scoring 50 competitive goals for the club in all competitions.

"I was surprised we went so close to winning the title at the first attempt after I arrived," says O'Neill. "That had the effect of raising expectations and I'm glad that we have met those over the course of this year."

It was heartbreaking for Bohs who beat Dundalk 3-1 in their final game, but they only have themselves to blame for throwing the title away.

The Gypsies' season had started in uncertainty as manager Pat Fenlon looked set to quit for Dundee United, but the clubs could not agree on compensation and Fenlon stayed at Dalymount Park.

After beating TNS 1-0 in the first leg of their Champions League qualifier in July, Bohs then suffered a huge setback when they went down 4-0 in the second leg in Wales. This was a real blow to the club, who were struggling financially and badly needed to progress in Europe. And the situation has worsened since then with the north Dublin club looking as though they may have to revert to a part-time set-up next season.

Sligo Rovers enjoyed another good season. The west of Ireland club, managed by Liverpool-born Paul Cook, finished third in the league, beat Monaghan United 1-0 in the League Cup Final and Shamrock Rovers in the FAI Cup Final on penalties.

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It's been emotional...Shamrock skipper Stephen Rice is on his knees

Sporting Fingal, who won the FAI Cup last year in their first season in the league, clinched a Europa Cup spot by finishing fourth.

For a while it looked as if St Pat's would end their barren spell in the FAI Cup – the Saints have not won the cup since 1961 – but they went out to Shamrock after a replay in the semi-final and then lost out to Sporting Fingal for the Europa spot. They were also beaten in the All-Ireland Cup Final by Bohemians.

Drogheda United were relegated and replaced by Derry City – for many years the league's big crowd-pullers.

Cork City, who almost went out of business pre-season, are now owned by a local co-operative and, while they didn't gain promotion this season, their future is now secure.

Sean Creedon

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
RICHIE RYAN (Sligo Rovers)
A cultured midfielder who joined Sligo in July 2008 after spells with Sunderland, Scunthorpe United and Boston United in England, and a season with Royal Antwerp in Belgium.

COACH OF THE SEASON
MICHAEL O'NEILL
(Shamrock Rovers)
Arrived from Brechin City in December 2008 and took Rovers to second place in his first season, followed by the title this year.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
SHAUN WILLIAMS
(Sporting Fingal)
All-action midfielder who joined Fingal from Drogheda United last year after loan spells at Dundalk and Finn Harps.

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Playmaker...Ryan was at the hub of Sligo's successful season

PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamrock (CL)	36	19	10	7	57	34	67
Bohemians (EL)	36	19	10	7	50	29	67
Sligo (EL)	36	17	12	7	61	36	63
Fingal (EL)	36	16	14	6	60	38	62
St Patrick's	36	16	9	11	55	33	57
Dundalk	36	14	6	16	46	50	48
UCD	36	11	8	17	47	54	41
Galway	36	9	11	16	38	59	38
Bray	36	6	9	21	35	72	27
Drogheda (R)	36	4	9	23	30	74	21

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: Derry City

worldmags

SWEDEN Malmo's last-day triumph

CELEBRATING their centenary this year, Malmo marked the occasion in the best possible fashion, holding off the challenge of southern arch-rivals Helsingborgs to claim their first Swedish championship in six years.

Level on points with Helsingborgs going into the final weekend of the campaign but with a substantially superior goal difference, Malmo duly clinched their 16th title thanks to a 2-0 home victory over much-improved Mjallby.

Twice defeated by Mjallby this season – once in the league and once in the Swedish Cup – Malmo could have been excused for feeling a little apprehensive in the run-up to D-Day. But they held their nerve and, with Jiloan Hamad volleying home on 17 minutes and Agon Mehmeti adding another seconds before the half-time whistle, the result was never in doubt. As for Helsingborgs, they had to make to do with the runners-up spot after being held to an anti-climactic goalless draw by mid-table Kalmar.

The Swedish championship continues to be as unpredictable as it is democratic. In the past dozen years no fewer than nine different clubs have stepped onto the top step of the podium.

How life has turned full circle for Malmo boss Roland Nilsson, for whom this was the first trophy of a coaching career which had previously taken him to the dugouts of Coventry City in England and GAIS in Gothenburg. Unable to do better in his first two seasons at Malmo than a pair of highly disappointing mid-table finishes, the former long-serving international right-back was thought by some to be living on borrowed time, but the club board stood by him and this time around he struck gold, making the correct tactical and personnel calls, finding the right words to keep the feet of his young side on the ground and delivering attractive attacking football.

Beaten just once at home all year, Malmo's resilience formed the core of their success. With Helsingborgs totally dominant in the first half of the season – not one loss in their opening dozen games – the title looked theirs for the taking. However, Malmo simply refused to lie down and after the summer break they went on an eight-match unbeaten run to force their way to the front.

The triumph of Malmo was very much one of multiculturalism. Almost half their squad are of migrant stock and without their contribution the title would not have been possible. Striker Mehmeti, their top scorer with 11 goals, is of Kosovan descent, Sweden international creative midfielder Guillermo Molins was born in Uruguay and attacking all-rounder Jeffrey Aubynn – another Sweden international – has Ghanaian lineage.

Not that the indigenous did not play their part as well. After many years as a top-class midfielder, Daniel Andersson slotted in effortlessly this term in central defence, while young front man Daniel Larsson was never anything less than formidable.

Joining Helsingborgs – who beat Hammarby 1-0 to win the Swedish Cup – in the Europa League next season will be Orebro who, despite a shaky start and the mid-term return to his homeland of key Danish striker Kim Olsen (to Vejle), improved week on week and thoroughly deserved their third place. Pre-season title favourites Elfsborg could do no better than fourth, shot down by their inconsistency and failure to make the most of their opportunities.

By and large 2010 was the year of the big-club flop in the Allsvenskan. Last season's champions AIK Solna spent most of the campaign in the relegation zone and only pulled themselves out of the demotion tailspin at the 11th-hour, while IFK Gothenburg, who many saw as potential champions, proved the archetypal all-or-nothing side: brilliant one day, abysmal the next.

Shorn of their best defenders in pre-season, Brommapjkarna were always up against it and fell out of the top flight along with one-season wonders Atviadbergs, who did not manage a goal until round seven.

Norrkoping and Syrianska won promotion from the Superettan, while Gefle (14th in the top flight) defeated Sundsvall (third in the Superettan) in the relegation/promotion play-offs.

Nick Bidwell

Hat trick...Malmo's Mehmeti (left) and Dardan Rexhep celebrate their title success

Won fans over...Nilsson

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
DANIEL LARSSON (Malmo)
With his 10 goals and as many assists, the 23-year-old's infinite range of attacking virtues were fundamental to his club's championship success.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MOSTAFA EL KABIR (Mjallby)
Thrown out by Dutch side NEC for disciplinary reasons, the young Moroccan striker bounced back with a vengeance, scoring the goals to help the elite new boys to a fine sixth-place finish.

COACH OF THE SEASON
ROLAND NILSSON (Malmo)
When appointed coach of the Sky Blues in 2007, a proportion of Malmo fans thought an ex-star of local rivals Helsingborgs was not for them. Now they don't care.

ALLSVENSKAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo (CL)	30	21	4	5	59	24	67
Helsingborgs (EL)	30	20	5	5	49	26	65
Orebro (EI)	30	16	4	10	40	30	52
Elfsborg (EL)	30	12	11	7	55	40	47
Trelleborgs	30	13	5	12	39	42	44
Mjallby	30	11	10	9	36	29	43
IFK	30	10	10	10	42	29	40
Hacken	30	11	7	12	40	42	40
Kalmar	30	10	10	10	36	38	40
Djurgardens	30	11	7	12	35	42	40
AIK	30	10	5	15	29	36	35
Halmstads	30	10	5	15	31	42	35
GAIS	30	8	8	14	24	35	32
Gefle	30	7	8	15	33	46	29
Atvidabergs (R)	30	7	8	15	32	51	29
Bro'karna (R)	30	6	7	17	20	48	25

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

Promoted: Norrkoping, Syrianska

FAROE ISLANDS HB triumph once again

FIVE of the 10 teams in the Faroese Premier League topped the table at some point during the season, but a thrilling campaign ended with HB retaining their crown.

The team from Torshavn secured their 21st Faroese title in the best possible way with a 2-1 derby victory over capital rivals B36. Skipper Frodi Benjaminsen and Hendrik Rubeksen were on target for the champions in front of UEFA president Michel Platini, who presented the club with the league trophy afterwards.

Trailing NSI Runavik by seven points at one stage, an embarrassing 4-1 home defeat by Suduroy in September resulted in HB sacking coach Kristjan Gudmundsson and replacing him with Julian Hansen. The former HB player led his charges on a run that saw them collect 16 points out of a possible 18 to finish three clear of EB/Streymur, who took consolation in winning the Faroese Cup for the third time in four years. They beat IF Fuglafjordor 1-0 in the Final with a goal from Romanian striker Sorin Anghel in his 250th game for the club.

NSI, who eventually finished third, found themselves rock-bottom after four games before they went from relegation candidates to title contenders with a nine-game winning run. NSI's Christian Hogni Jacobsen and Arnbjorn Hansen of EB/Streymur finished league joint-top scorers with 22 goals apiece.

The relegation battle had its last-day drama too. B71 Sandoy stayed up by the narrowest of margins, surviving by a solitary point despite being thrashed 9-1 by NSI in their last game of the season as Suduroy, needing only a draw to beat the drop instead of Sandoy, lost 1-0 at already-relegated AB Argir.

Suduroy, who came up last season, and Argir, who were promoted the year before, will be replaced next term by second-tier champions 07 Vestur and runners-up KI Klaksvik, who both return to the top flight after an absence of just one year.

John Holmesdale

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HB Torshavn (CL)	27	16	6	5	49	32	54
EB/Streymur (EL)	27	14	9	4	65	30	51
NSI Runavik (EL)	27	14	6	7	60	33	48
IF Fuglafjordur (EL)	27	12	7	8	50	41	43
Vikingur	27	12	7	8	44	35	43
B36 Torshavn	27	11	7	9	44	36	40
B68 Toftir	27	8	7	12	42	47	31
B71 Sandoy	27	5	8	14	24	65	23
Suduroy (R)	27	5	7	15	33	54	22
AB Argir (R)	27	2	8	17	27	65	14

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

***Promoted:** 07 Vestur, KI Klaksvik*

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
FRODI BENJAMINSEN (HB)

His side's top scorer, with 13 goals from midfield, he remains one of the Faroes' best performers.

COACH OF THE SEASON
JULIAN HANSEN (HB)
Won five and drew one of his six games in charge as he led the club he once played for to the title.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ERLING JACOBSEN (Vikingur)
The 20-year-old defender returned to the club from Danish second-division side Vanlose in the summer and ended the season making a full debut against Northern Ireland.

ICELAND Debut championship for Breidablik

AFTER a three-way title race that went down to the wire, the 2010 season will be remembered as one of the most entertaining in many years.

In the end it was Breidablik who held on to see off holders FH and Westman Islands' club IBV to claim the first title in their 60-year history.

Entering the final day a point ahead of IBV and two clear of FH, the title was Breidablik's to lose. As things turned out, a nervy 0-0 draw away to Stjarnan was sufficient to wrest the title from FH on goal difference, leaving IBV to reflect on what might have been following their 3-1 defeat at Keflavik.

Playing an attractive brand of disciplined but attacking football, Breidablik were deserved champions and their success follows on from last year's Icelandic Cup triumph.

Pre-season title favourites KR had a disastrous start to the season and coach Logi Olafsson left in July. While a late rally under new boss Runar Kristinsson pushed the team into title contention for a time, their recovery was tempered by a 4-0 Icelandic Cup Final thrashing at the hands of FH.

After lively starts, Fram and Keflavik both faded sharply to finish fifth and sixth respectively, while a disappointing seventh-place finish for Valur saw coach Gunnluagur Jonsson replaced by Kristjan Gudmundsson as soon as the season ended.

Captain ...Breidablik's Kari Arsaelsson

After the embarrassment of an Icelandic Cup quarter-final exit at home to third-division Vikingur Olafsvik, Stjarnan consolidated their top-flight status by finishing eighth, while Fylkir and Grindavik avoided the drop by the narrowest of margins. However, the latter can take some comfort from the form of their Gabon striker Gilles Mbang Ondo, who finished as the league's joint-top scorer with 14 goals in 20 matches, having played one game fewer than Breidablik's Alfred Finnbogason and two less than Atli Vidar Bjornsson of FH, who both finished with the same tally.

Haukar and Selfoss will be replaced by Vikingur from the capital Reykjavik and northern side Thor, who return to the top flight after absences of three and eight years respectively.

While the quality of the domestic season was reflected in healthy attendances, European competition once again proved a step too far for all of Iceland's representatives.

FH exited the Champions League qualifiers at the first hurdle to Belarus champions BATE by an emphatic 6-1 on aggregate, a failure repeated by Fylkir in the Europa League – and by the same score — to another side from Belarus, Tarpeda Zhodzina.

And with Breidablik going out of the Europa League to Scottish club Motherwell, only KR succeeded in making any progress, beating Northern Ireland's Glentoran 5-2 before falling to Ukrainian outfit Karpaty Lviv.

On the international front, Iceland's senior side continued to disappoint, losing its first three Euro 2012 qualifying matches. However, national pride was restored by the Under-21s who became the country's first senior men's team to qualify for the finals of a major tournament when they reached next year's Euro finals.

Rab Christie

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
ALFRED FINNBOGASON (Breidablik)
Helped the national Under-21 side reach next summer's Euro finals and has now joined Lokeren of Belgium.

COACH OF THE SEASON

OLAFUR KRISTJANSSON (Breidablik)
Has won the Icelandic Cup and league title in successive seasons at a club with no previous major trophies. Signed a deal to remain in charge until 2015.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
JON GUDNI FJOLUSON (Fram)
The 21-year-old defender came of age this season, scoring five goals and earning a place in the national side.

URVALSDEILD

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Breidablik (CL)	22	13	5	4	47	23	44
FH (EL)	22	13	5	4	48	31	44
IBV (EL)	22	13	3	6	36	27	42
KR (EL)	22	11	5	6	45	31	38
Fram	22	9	5	8	35	35	32
Keflavik	22	8	6	8	30	32	30
Valur	22	7	7	8	34	41	28
Stjarnan	22	6	7	9	39	42	25
Fylkir	22	7	3	12	36	42	24
Grindavik	22	5	6	11	28	39	21
Haukar (R)	22	4	8	10	29	45	20
Selfoss (R)	22	5	2	15	32	51	17

(CL) Champions League, (EL) Europa League, (R) Relegated

***Promoted:** Thor, Vikingur*

worldmags

PEOPLE in the news

Time's up...Olsen

EUROPE

Olsen to step down after 12 years

Denmark boss MORTEN OLSEN will stand down after 12 years in the job following EURO 2012. The former national team captain, who was capped 102 times, guided his country to the 2002 and 2010 World Cups finals as coach, as well as reaching the Euro quarter-finals in 2004.

RAY WILKINS left his post as assistant coach at Chelsea after the club chose not to renew his contract. Wilkins, who was also assistant to LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI and GUUS HIDDINK, was praised by current boss CARLO ANCELOTTI, who said: "Ray did a fantastic job. He helped me and the team win the double. So the first thing is to say a lot of thanks to him.

"He is my friend. I have a fantastic relationship with him, and I will have a fantastic relationship with him. The club made this decision."

Happy... Wilkins (left) and Ancelotti

Chelsea had yet to announce a replacement for Wilkins, who was told of his dismissal at half-time during a reserve team game.

DAMIAN COMOLLI has joined Liverpool as Director of Football Strategy and will assist manager ROY HODGSON with dealings in the transfer market. The former Tottenham director of football had been working most recently as sporting director at St Etienne.

Molde boy...Solskjaer

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER has left his post as reserve team manager at Manchester United to return home to Norway to coach former club Molde.

STUART BAXTER stepped down as coach of Finland after reaching the end of his contract. OLLI HUTTUNEN was put in temporary charge of the side for the Euro 2012 qualifier against San Marino on November 17.

Bayern Munich's Croatia striker IVICA OLIC will miss the rest of the season after undergoing knee surgery which will rule him out for six months. The 31-year-old has played just six Bundesliga and two Champions League games this term.

Fiorentina striker ADRIAN MUTU made his first appearance for nine months, following a doping suspension, in his side's 0-0 draw at Catania.

Tottenham Hotspur have agreed a pre-contract agreement for South Africa defender BONGANI KHUMALO to move to England from SuperSport United in January, subject to a work permit being granted. The 23-year-old played in all three of his country's World Cup games in the summer and scored in the 2-1 victory over France.

Switzerland captain ALEX FREI will retire from international football at the end of the season. The Basle striker, who said criticism of his recent performances had made up his mind, is his country's record goalscorer with 40 in 81 games.

Free agent...Kezman

Serbia striker MATEJA KEZMAN, 31, has left Paris Saint-Germain by mutual consent. Signed from Turkish side Fenerbahce in 2008, Kezman failed to hold down a regular starting place and was loaned to Zenit St Petersburg for six months until January this year.

Real Madrid midfielder RUBEN DE LA RED retired at the age of 25 due to the heart problem which has prevented him from playing for the last two years.

MIGUEL GARCIA, a midfielder with Spanish second-tier side Salamanca, suffered a heart attack during his side's league game against Real Betis. The 31-year-old collapsed on the pitch and it took doctors more than five minutes to bring him back to consciousness.

Ex-Czech Republic and Juventus midfielder PAVEL NEDVED joined the board of the Serie A club.

Former Blackburn Rovers and England captain RONNIE CLAYTON, who won 35 caps for his country and played at the 1958 World Cup, died at the age of 76.

One-time Ajax, Milan and Juventus midfielder EDGAR DAVIDS has left Crystal Palace. The 37-year-old Holland international joined the club in August but made just seven starts for the English second-tier side.

Gone...Davids

Tampere United have announced former Finland midfielder JARKKO WISS will take over as coach next season, replacing ARI HJELM, who has stepped down after a nine-year reign that brought the club three national titles and one Finnish Cup.

Bottom of the table Austrian side Linz replaced coach HELMUT KRAFT with GEORG ZELLHOFER.

Principles...Bielsa

SOUTH AMERICA

Bielsa quits as Chile coach

THE Argentinian sports daily *Ole* had a tongue-in-cheek back page headline after Marcelo Bielsa's announcement that he was quitting as Chile coach if a new regime took charge of the Chilean FA (ANFP).

It said: "Bielsa's announcement summarised: 'I resign.'" There was no text.

This was tongue-in-cheek because it was miles from the long-winded monologues Bielsa gives at the start of his conferences.

Bielsa did not unexpectedly call a news conference the day before the ANFP presidential election on November 4, simply to say he was resigning if Jorge Segovia beat incumbent president Harold Mayne-Nicholls to the chair.

Typical of Bielsa, he spoke for more than two hours, using language more akin to his brother, a former foreign minister.

He explained it was important to feel good in one's job and how much he had enjoyed being Chile's coach since Mayne-Nicholls gave him the job in 2007.

"I can't nor will work in common with Mr Segovia, it's impossible for me to do that," he said about 15 to 20 minutes into the conference which is when the gathered media knew for certain that he had called it to announce a possible rupture.

The next day, to the disappointment of many, Segovia won the election 28-22 and Bielsa's resignation was taken as certain. He was concluding his work with the team in the friendly at home to Uruguay on November 17 that marked the national team's centenary.

"The fifth best trainer in the world was with us. We offered him a project that attracted him and we were able to develop. We gave the fans a lot of happiness," Mayne-Nicholls said.

Rex Gowar

ANGEL CAPPA was sacked as coach of River Plate after a 1-0 loss to All Boys made it seven games in a row without a win for River. Juan Jose Lopez was been placed in temporary control of the team.

Sacked...Cappa

Colombian referee OSCAR RUIZ, who has officiated at three World Cups, was rushed to hospital after being found unconscious at his home in Villavicencio.

His father told reporters his son had suffered from the effects of scopolamine, which is extracted from a plant known in Colombia as "drunken cocoa" and which can cause severe memory loss. It is not known how the incident happened.

Former Corinthians coach ADILSON BATISTA will take charge of Santos in the new year. The 42-year-old will replace Dorival Junior who was sacked from his position in September after an argument with teenage star Neymar.

Oriente Petrolero coach GUSTAVO QUINTEROS will take charge of Bolivia's national team when the Bolivian clausura finishes at the end of November. He played for Bolivia at the 1994 World Cup.

CONCACAF

Former Germany coach JURGEN KLINSMANN agreed a deal to work as a consultant with MLS club Toronto.

AFRICA

FIFA agreed to pay former Togo goalkeeper KODJOVI OBILALE £62,000 in compensation for the injuries he sustained after his country's team bus was fired upon by separatist rebels in Cabinda prior to the 2010 African Nations Cup in Angola in January. The

Shot...Obilale

25-year-old was shot in the back and abdomen during an attack in which Togo's assistant coach AMELETE ABALO, media officer STANISLAS O'CLOO and the bus driver were killed.

Last season's Kenyan league champions Sofapaka sacked coach SAM SSIMBWA with two games left of the current campaign.

EBO MENDS was sacked by one of Ghana's biggest clubs, Asante Kotoko, after a 1-0 defeat at home to arch-rivals Hearts of Oak. He had been dismissed 11 years previously after losing to the same opponents. Former player OPOKU NTI was appointed interim coach.

Consultant...Klinsmann

ASIA

Former Argentina midfielder and Saudi Arabia boss GABRIEL CALDERON, who won the 2009 Saudi title with Al Ittihad, was announced as the successor to Eric Gerets at Al Hilal.

Former England striker FRANCIS JEFFERS has joined Australian A-League side Newcastle Jets on a short-term deal. The 29-year-old has played in

Jet boy...Jeffers (right)

the Premier League with Everton and Arsenal and scored on his only England appearance – against Australia in 2003.

Pohang Steelers favourite HWANG SUN-HONG returned to coach his former club after three years in charge of K-League rivals Busan I'Park.

Japan's Shimizu S-Pulse announced that coach KENTA HASEGAWA will leave the club at the end of the season.

On target...Chamakh

70 goals scored in European club competition by Filippo Inzaghi, putting the Milan striker joint-top of the all-time list with Raul

ENGLAND

The joy of six

Marouane Chamakh became the first player to score in six consecutive Champions League matches when he found the net for Arsenal at home to Shakhtar Donetsk. He was on target in his previous two games for the Gunners and in three games for Bordeaux prior to that.

FRANCE

Record away win

Marseille's 7-0 win against Zilina in Slovakia was the biggest-ever away victory in the Champions League.

GERMANY

Bayern go through

Mario Gomez scored a hat-trick as Bayern Munich won 4-0 away to CFR Cluj and became one of three clubs to have secured their place in the knockout stage of the Champions League, along with Chelsea and Real Madrid.

ITALY

Goal-den oldie

Internazionale's 37-year-old captain Javier Zanetti became the Champions League's

RESULTS

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 20
Internazionale (Ita) 4 (Zanetti 2, Eto'o pen 11, 35, Stankovic 14)
Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 3 (Bale 52, 90, 90+1)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 49,551. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Chivu (Pandev 61), Zanetti, Stankovic (Santon 50), Biabiany (Cordoba 75), Sneijder, Coutinho, Eto'o.
Tottenham: Gomes - Hutton, Bassong, Gallas, Assou-Ekotto, Lennon, Huddlestone (Palacios 80), Jenas, Bale, Modric (Cudicini 11), Crouch (Keane 67). *Sent off: Gomes 8min.*

Oct 20
Twente Enschede (Hol) 1 (Janssen 75)
Werder Bremen (Ger) 1 (Arnautovic 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,248. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Twente: Mihaylov - Rosales, Wisgerhof (Bengtsson 24), Douglas, Tiendalli, Brama, Landzaat (De Jong 86), Janssen, Ruiz, Chadli, Janko.
Werder: Wiese (Mielitz 37) - Fritz, Mertesacker, Prodl, Pasanen, Bargfrede (Marin 77), Frings, Wesley, Pizarro, Hunt, Hugo Almeida (Arnautovic 60).

Nov 2
Tottenham Hotspur 3 (Van der Vaart 18, Crouch 61, Pavlyuchenko 89)
Internazionale 1 (Eto'o 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,103. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Tottenham: Cudicini - Hutton, Gallas, Kaboul, Assou-Ekotto, Lennon (Palacios 85), Huddlestone, Modric, Bale, Van der Vaart (Jenas 46), Crouch (Pavlyuchenko 76).
Inter: Castellazzi - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Chivu, Muntari (Obiora 53), Zanetti, Biabiany (Coutinho 64), Sneijder, Pandev (Milito 71), Eto'o.

Nov 2
Werder Bremen 0
Twente Enschede 2 (Chadli 81, De Jong 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,200. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Werder: Mielitz - Prodl, Mertesacker, Frings, Wesley, Jensen, Bargfrede (Arnautovic 59), Hunt, Marin, Pizarro, Hugo Almeida.
Sent off: Frings 75min.
Twente: Mihaylov - Bengtsson (Schimpelsberger 76), Wisgerhof, Douglas, Leugers, Rosales, Landzaat, De Jong (Stockentree 90+1), Ruiz, Chadli (Vujicevic 85), Janko.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham	4	2	1	1	12	8	7
Inter	4	2	1	1	11	8	7
Twente	4	1	2	1	6	7	5
Werder	4	0	2	2	3	9	2

Sep 14 Twente v Internazionale..... 2-2
Werder v Tottenham..... 2-2
Sep 29 Internazionale v Werder..... 4-0
Tottenham v Twente..... 4-1
Oct 20 Internazionale v Tottenham..... 4-3
Twente v Werder..... 1-1
Nov 2 Tottenham v Internazionale..... 3-1
Werder v Twente..... 0-2
Nov 24 Internazionale v Twente
Tottenham v Werder
Dec 7 Twente v Tottenham
Werder v Internazionale

Group B

Oct 20
Lyon (Fra) 2 (Briand 21, Lopez 51)
Benfica (Por) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,816. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Diakhate, Cissokho, Gourcuff (Kallstrom 71), Gonalons, Pjanic, Briand, Lopez (Gomis 82), Michel Bastos (Pied 64).
Benfica: Roberto - Pereira, Luisao, David Luiz, Fabio Coentrao, Carlos Martins (Salvio 77), Javi Garcia, Gaitan, Aimar (Jara 71), Saviola (Cesar Peixoto 57), Kardec. *Sent off: Gaitan 43min.*

Oct 20
Schalke (Ger) 3 (Raul 3, 59, Jurado 68)
Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr) 1 (Shechter 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,900. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Schalke: Neuer - Uchida, Howedes, Metzelder, Schmitz, Jones (Matip 75), Farfan (Hao 67), Moritz (Rakitic 53), Jurado, Huntelaar, Raul.
Hapoel: Enyeama - Kende, Badier, Douglas, Shish, Abutbul (Toama 57), Yadin (Fransman 72), Vermouth, Zahavi, Shechter, Tamuz (Sahar 58).

Nov 2
Benfica 4 (Kardec 20, Fabio Coentrao 32, 67, Javi Garcia 42)
Lyon 3 (Gourcuff 75, Gomis 85, Lovren 90+5)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 37,394. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Benfica: Roberto - Pereira, Luisao, David Luiz, Cesar Peixoto, Javi Garcia, Carlos Martins (Felipe Menezes 75), Fabio Coentrao, Salvio, Saviola (Jara 70), Kardec (Weldon 71).
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris, Diakhate (Gomis 59), Lovren, Gonalons, Pjanic (Makoun 71), Gourcuff, Michel Bastos, Pied (Lacazette 71), Briand.

Nov 2
Hapoel Tel Aviv 0
Schalke 0
Att: 12,132. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Hapoel: Enyeama - Bondarv, Badier, Douglas (Fransman 42), Ben Dayan, Zahavi, Abutbul, Vermouth, Toama (Shivhon 61), Tamuz, Sahar (Mare 70).
Schalke: Neuer - Uchida, Howedes, Metzelder, Escudero, Kluge (Moritz 46), Rakitic (Edu 74), Farfan (Deac 81), Jurado, Raul, Huntelaar.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	4	3	0	1	9	5	9
Schalke	4	2	1	1	5	2	7
Benfica	4	2	0	2	6	7	6
Hapoel Tel Aviv	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

Sep 14 Benfica v Hapoel Tel Aviv..... 2-0
Lyon v Schalke..... 1-0
Sep 29 Hapoel Tel Aviv v Lyon..... 1-3
Schalke v Benfica..... 2-0
Oct 20 Lyon v Benfica..... 2-0
Schalke v Hapoel Tel Aviv..... 3-1
Nov 2 Benfica v Lyon..... 4-3
Hapoel Tel Aviv v Schalke..... 0-0
Nov 24 Hapoel Tel Aviv v Benfica
Schalke v Lyon
Dec 7 Benfica v Schalke
Lyon v Hapoel Tel Aviv

Group C

Oct 20
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Nani 7)
Bursaspor (Tur) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 72,610. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Man United: Kuszczak - Rafael, Smalling, Vidic, Evra, Fletcher, Carrick, Anderson (Hernandez 78), Nani, Macheda, Park (Obertan 71).
Bursaspor: Ivankov - Ali (Mustafa 71), Omer, Stepanov (Ibrahim 46), Vederson, Svensson, Ergic, Volkan, Insua, Ozan, Sercan (Turgay 46).

Oct 20
Rangers (Sco) 1 (Edu 34)
Valencia (Spa) 1 (Edu og 46)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,153. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Rangers: McGregor - Foster, Bougherra, Weir, Papac, Whittaker, S Naismith, Davis, Edu, Weiss (Lafferty 88), Miller.
Valencia: Cesar - Bruno, David Navarro, Ricardo Costa, Mathieu, Mehmet, Tino Costa (Manuel Fernandes 76), Pablo, Dominguez (Soldado 46), Mata (Vicente 85), Aduriz.

Nov 2
Bursaspor 0
Manchester United 3 (Fletcher 48, Obertan 73, Bebe 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 19,050. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Bursaspor: Ivankov - Ali, Omer, Ibrahim, Vederson, Turgay, Svensson, Ergic, Volkan (Ismail 81), Insua (Nunez 74), Sercan (Ozan 74).
Man United: Van der Sar - Rafael, Smalling, Vidic, Evra (Fabio 79), Scholes, Carrick, Nani (Park 29), Fletcher (Bebe 61), Obertan, Berbatov.

Nov 2
Valencia 3 (Soldado 33, 70, Tino Costa 90)
Rangers 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 26,821. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Valencia: Cesar - Miguel, David Navarro, Ricardo Costa, Mathieu, Albelda, Banega (Tino Costa 70), Joaquin (Pablo 85), Mata, Soldado (Manuel Fernandes 78), Aduriz.
Rangers: McGregor - Broadfoot, Weir, Bougherra, Papac, McCulloch, Whittaker, Davis, Edu (Lafferty 84), S Naismith, Miller.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man United	4	3	1	0	5	0	10
Valencia	4	2	1	1	8	2	7
Rangers	4	1	2	1	2	4	5
Bursaspor	4	0	0	4	0	9	0

Sep 14 Bursaspor v Valencia..... 0-4
Man United v Rangers..... 0-0
Sep 29 Rangers v Bursaspor..... 1-0
Valencia v Man United..... 0-1
Oct 20 Man United v Bursaspor..... 1-0
Rangers v Valencia..... 1-1
Nov 2 Bursaspor v Man United..... 0-3
Valencia v Rangers..... 3-0
Nov 24 Rangers v Man United
Valencia v Bursaspor
Dec 7 Bursaspor v Rangers
Man United v Valencia

Group D

Oct 20
Barcelona (Spa) 2 (Messi 19, 90+2)
Copenhagen (Den) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,852. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
Barcelona: Pinto - Daniel Alves, Pique, Puyol, Abidal, Busquets, Mascherano, Maxwell (Pedro 73), Messi, Villa (Xavi 73), Iniesta (Keita 89).
Copenhagen: Wiland - Pospech, Jorgensen, Antonsson, Wendt (Larsson 89), Vingaard (Bolanos 62), Kvist, Claudemir, Gronkjaer, N'Doye, Santin (Zohore 74).

Oct 20
Panathinaikos (Gre) 0
Rubin Kazan (Rus) 0
Att: 36,748. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)
Panathinaikos: Tzorvas - Vyntra, Boumsong, Sarriegi, Spyropoulos, Katsouranis (Plessis 62), Simao, Marinos (Mavrias 78), Karagounis (Christodoulopoulos 62), Luis Garcia, Cisse.
Rubin: Ryzhikov - Kaleshin, Bocchetti, Cesar Navas, Ansaldi, Natcho, Noboa, Ryazantsev, Kasaev (Bystrov 86), Gokdeniz (Martins 65), Kornilenko (Sibaya 90+6).

Nov 2
Copenhagen 1 (Claudemir 33)
Barcelona 1 (Messi 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 37,049. **Ref:** Balaj (Rom)
Copenhagen: Wiland - Pospech, Jorgensen, Antonsson, Wendt, Bolanos (Delaney 90+3), Kvist, Claudemir, Vingaard (Ottesen 90), N'Doye, Gronkjaer.
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Puyol, Abidal, Xavi, Busquets, Keita, Villa (Pedro 80), Messi, Iniesta.

Nov 2
Rubin Kazan 0
Panathinaikos 0
Att: 16,400. **Ref:** Chapron (Fra)
Rubin: Ryzhikov - Kaleshin, Bocchetti, Cesar Navas, Ansaldi, Natcho, Noboa, Ryazantsev, Kasaev (Gokdeniz 72), Carlos Eduardo (Martins 72), Kornilenko (Medvedev 86).
Panathinaikos: Tzorvas - Boumsong (Marinos 58), Katsouranis, Kante, Spyropoulos, Vyntra, Simao, Gilberto Silva, Luis Garcia (Govou 69), Karagounis (Christodoulopoulos 81), Cisse.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	4	2	2	0	9	3	8
Copenhagen	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Rubin Kazan	4	0	3	1	1	2	3
Panathinaikos	4	0	2	2	1	7	2

Sep 14 Barcelona v Panathinaikos..... 5-1
Copenhagen v Rubin..... 1-0
Sep 29 Panathinaikos v Copenhagen... 0-2
Rubin v Barcelona..... 1-1
Oct 20 Barcelona v Copenhagen..... 2-0
Panathinaikos v Rubin..... 0-0
Nov 2 Copenhagen v Barcelona..... 1-1
Rubin v Panathinaikos..... 0-0
Nov 24 Panathinaikos v Barcelona
Rubin v Copenhagen
Dec 7 Barcelona v Rubin
Copenhagen v Panathinaikos

Oldest...Zanetti

oldest scorer as the holders beat 10-man Tottenham Hotspur 4-3 in the San Siro.

The visitors' goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes was sent off after just eight minutes and the Italians were 4-0 up at half-time, before Gareth Bale scored a stunning second-half hat-trick.

RUSSIA

Zhirkov's happy return

Former CSKA Moscow wing-back Yuri Zhirkov, who grabbed Chelsea's opener in the 2-0 win away to Spartak Moscow, became the first Russian to score against a Russian team in the Champions League.

Meanwhile, CSKA and Zenit are through to the next round of the Europa League after beating Palermo 3-1 and Hajduk Split 3-2 respectively. They are joined in the knockout stage of the competition by BATE, Porto and Stuttgart.

The first...Zhirkov

105 Champions League games for Real Madrid's Iker Casillas, which is a record for a keeper

Group E

Oct 19

Bayern Munich (Ger) 3 (Cadu og 32, Panin og 37, Gomez 77)
CFR Cluj (Rom) 2 (Cadu 28, Culio 86)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 64,000. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Tymoshchuk, Badstuber, Pranjic, Ottl, Schweinsteiger (Braafheid 79), Altintop, Kroos, Muller, Gomez.
CFR: Stancioiu - Rada, Cadu, Piccolo, Panin, Rafael (Hora 56), Kivuvu, Dica, Culio, De Zerbi, Traore (Bjelanovic 76).

Oct 19

Roma (Ita) 1 (Borriello 21)
Basle (Swi) 3 (Frei 12, Inkoom 44, Cabral 90+3)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 22,365. **Ref:** Nikolaev (Rus)
Roma: Lobont - Cassetti, Mexes, N Burdisso, Riise (Castellini 60), Taddei, Brighi, Pizarro, Perrotta (Julio Baptista 74), Totti, Borriello.
Basle: Costanzo - Inkoom, Abraham, Ferati, Safari, Shaqiri, Huggel, Yapi, Stocker (Chipperfield 70), Frei (Almerares 90), Streller (Cabral 81).

Nov 3

Basle 2 (Frei 69, Shaqiri 83)
Roma 3 (Menez 16, Totti pen 25, Greco 76)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 36,375. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Basle: Costanzo - Inkoom, Abraham, Ferati (Chipperfield 88), Safari, Shaqiri, Huggel, Yapi, Stocker, Frei, Streller. *Sent off: Stocker 90+1min.*
Roma: Julio Sergio - Cassetti, Juan, N Burdisso (G Burdisso 81), Riise, Menez (Greco 75), De Rossi, Simplicio, Perrotta, Totti, Vucinic (Borriello 70).

Nov 3

CFR Cluj 0
Bayern Munich 4 (Gomez 12, 24, 71, Muller 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 14,097. **Ref:** Gumienny (Blg)
CFR: Stancioiu - Panin, Cadu (Tony 78), Piccolo, Rada, Rafael (Hora 46), Tomas Costa, Dica (Edimar 46), Culio, De Zerbi, Traore.
Bayern: Butt - Lahm, Van Buyten, Demichelis, Pranjic, Tymoshchuk, Ottl, Altintop, Schweinsteiger (Muller 75), Kroos, Gomez.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	4	4	0	0	11	3	12
Roma	4	2	0	2	6	8	6
CFR Cluj	4	1	0	3	5	10	3
Basle	4	1	0	3	7	8	3

Sep 15	Bayern Munich v Roma..... 2-0
	CFR Cluj v Basle..... 2-1
Sep 28	Basle v Bayern Munich 1-2
	Roma v CFR Cluj 2-1
Oct 19	Bayern Munich v CFR Cluj..... 3-2
	Roma v Basle 1-3
Nov 3	Basle v Roma 2-3
	CFR Cluj v Bayern Munich..... 0-4
Nov 23	Basle v CFR Cluj
	Roma v Bayern Munich
Dec 8	Bayern Munich v Basle
	CFR Cluj v Roma

Group F

Oct 19

Marseille (Fra) 1 (Diawara 48)
Zilina (Slk) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 49,250. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Marseille: Mandanda - Azpilicueta, Diawara, Heinze, Taiwo, Gonzalez (Abriel 75), Mbia, A Ayew, Valbuena, Gignac (Cisse 83), Brandao (Remy 66).
Zilina: Dubravka - Angelovic, Piacek, Sourek, Leitner, Zosak (Vladavic 79), Guldan, Gergel (Rilke 63), Jez, Majtan (Oravec 68), Ceesay.

Oct 19

Spartak Moscow (Rus) 0
Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Zhirkov 24, Anelka 43)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 70,320. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Spartak: Dykan - Parshivlyuk, Suchy, Pareja, Makeev, McGeady, Sheshukov, Ibson, D Kombarov, Ari (Ananidze 85), Welliton.
Chelsea: Cech - Paulo Ferreira, Ivanovic, Terry, Cole (Van Aanholt 87), Essien, Mikel, Zhirkov, Kalou (McEachran 74), Anelka, Malouda (Kakuta 82).

Nov 3

Chelsea 4 (Anelka 49, Drogba pen 62, Ivanovic 66, 90+2)
Spartak Moscow 1 (Bazhenov 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,477. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Chelsea: Cech - Paulo Ferreira, Ivanovic, Alex, Cole, Mikel (McEachran 69), Ramires, Zhirkov, Kalou, Drogba (Sturridge 77), Anelka (Kakuta 76).
Spartak: Dykan - Ivanov, Pareja, Suchy, Makeev, Ibson, Sheshukov (Drincic 67), McGeady (Bazhenov 80), Alex (Kozlov 69), D Kombarov, Welliton.

Nov 3

Zilina 0
Marseille 7 (Gignac 12, 21, 54, Heinze 24, Remy 36, Gonzalez 52, 63)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 9,664. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
Zilina: Dubravka - Angelovic, Pecalka, Sourek, Leitner, Jez, Vittor (Zosak 34), Bello, Vladavic (Gergel 60), Ceesay (Majtan 78), Oravec.
Marseille: Mandanda - Azpilicueta, Diawara, Mbia, Heinze (Taiwo 62), Kabore, Gonzalez, Cheyrou, Valbuena (A Ayew 62), Gignac (Brandao 72), Remy.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	4	4	0	0	12	2	12
Spartak M'cow	4	2	0	2	5	6	6
Marseille	4	2	0	2	8	3	6
Zilina	4	0	0	4	1	15	0

Sep 15	Marseille v Spartak Moscow.... 0-1
	Zilina v Chelsea..... 1-4
Sep 28	Chelsea v Marseille..... 2-0
	Spartak Moscow v Zilina..... 3-0
Oct 19	Marseille v Zilina..... 1-0
	Spartak Moscow v Chelsea..... 0-2
Nov 3	Chelsea v Spartak Moscow..... 4-1
	Zilina v Marseille..... 0-7
Nov 23	Chelsea v Zilina
	Spartak Moscow v Marseille
Dec 8	Marseille v Chelsea
	Zilina v Spartak Moscow

ESM Team of the Month

European Sports Magazines — OCTOBER 2010

Nuri Sahin Borussia Dortmund Votes ●●●●
Dani Alves Barcelona Votes ●●
Branislav Ivanovic Chelsea Votes ●●●●
Steeve Elana Brest Votes ●●●
John Terry Chelsea Votes ●●●● ●
Gareth Bale Tottenham Hotspur Votes ●●●● ●●●

Lionel Messi Barcelona Votes ●●●● ●●●● ●
Mesut Ozil Real Madrid Votes ●●●● ●
Samuel Eto'o Internazionale Votes ●●●● ●●
Cristiano Ronaldo Real Madrid Votes ●●●● ●●●●
Rafael Van der Vaart Tottenham Hotspur Votes ●●●

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Magazines group vote for their first XI from Europe's top leagues. The players with the most votes make the overall team. For details of how ESM members voted this month, visit: **worldsoccer.com/esm11**

worldmags

Getting on...Pudishev

BELARUS

Dynamo's old-timer

Dynamo Brest's assistant coach Yuri Pudishev became the oldest player to appear in the country's professional league when, at the age of 56, he came on as a substitute in the 2-0 defeat by BATE.

Pudishev had been a decent player in his prime, winning the old Soviet Union championship with Dynamo Minsk in 1982 and also playing for Dynamo Moscow.

The oldest player ever to play in a professional game was Salvador Reyes, who was aged 71 when he lined-up for Guadalajara against Pumas in Mexico in January 2008. However, Reyes – who played in three World Cups – only appeared after being invited as an honorary gesture by the club and he was substituted after a couple of minutes.

BELGIUM

Eupen on the up

Eupen leapfrogged Charleroi at the bottom of the table with a shock 3-1 win away at Standard Liege.

Two goals from Kevin Vandenbergh put the visitors ahead, before Zoro Gohi-Bi replied for Standard. Abderazak Jadid made the result certain five minutes from time.

Brawl...Lovech (in orange) and Levski

Group G

Oct 19
Ajax (Hol) 2 (De Zeeuw 7, Suarez 41)
Auxerre (Fra) 1 (Birsa 56)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 51,383. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Ajax: Stekelenburg - Van der Wiel, Ooijer, Vertonghen, Emanuelson, Lindgren, De Zeeuw, Enoh, Suarez, El Hamdaoui, Sulejmani (Oleguer 60). *Sent off: Ooijer 55min.*
Auxerre: Sorin - Hengbart, Coulibaly, Grichting, Dudka, Pedretti, Ndinga, Birsa, Contout (Bourgeois 79), Chafni (Quercia 65), Oliech. *Sent off: Oliech 85min, Mignot (an unused sub) 90+1min.*

Oct 19
Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 13, Ozil 14)
Milan (Ita) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 71,657. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Arbeloa, Ricardo Carvalho, Pepe, Marcelo, Khedira, Xabi Alonso, Di Maria (Granero 87), Ozil (L Diarra 83), Cristiano Ronaldo, Higuain (Benzema 89).
Milan: Amelia - Zambrotta, Bonera, Nesta, Antonini, Gattuso (Boateng 59), Pirlo, Seedorf, Ronaldinho (Robinho 72), Ibrahimovic, Alexandre Pato (Inzaghi 78).

Nov 3
Auxerre 2 (Sammaritano 9, Langil 84)
Ajax 1 (Alderweireld 79)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,727. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Auxerre: Sorin - Hengbart, Coulibaly, Grichting, Dudka, Ndinga, Pedretti, Birsa, Contout (Chafni 80), Sammaritano (Berthod 86), Quercia (Langil 63).
Ajax: Stekelenburg - Van der Wiel, Alderweireld, Vertonghen, Anita (Sulejmani 58), Enoh (De Jong 46), Lindgren, De Zeeuw (Eriksen 83), Suarez, Emanuelson, El Hamdaoui.

Nov 3
Milan 2 (Inzaghi 68, 78)
Real Madrid 2 (Higuain 45, Leon 90+4)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 76,357. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Milan: Abbiati - Abate, Nesta, Thiago Silva, Zambrotta, Boateng, Pirlo, Gattuso (Seedorf 85), Ronaldinho (Inzaghi 59), Alexandre Pato (Ambrosini 72), Ibrahimovic.
Real Madrid: Casillas - Sergio Ramos, Pepe (Leon 80), Ricardo Carvalho, Marcelo, Khedira, Xabi Alonso, Di Maria, Ozil (Albiol 90+5), Cristiano Ronaldo, Higuain (Benzema 73).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Milan	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Ajax	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
Auxerre	4	1	0	3	3	6	3

Sep 15	Milan v Auxerre	2-0
	Real Madrid v Ajax	2-0
Sep 28	Ajax v Milan	1-1
	Auxerre v Real Madrid	0-1
Oct 19	Ajax v Auxerre	2-1
	Real Madrid v Milan	2-0
Nov 3	Auxerre v Ajax	2-1
	Milan v Real Madrid	2-2
Nov 23	Ajax v Real Madrid	
	Auxerre v Milan	
Dec 8	Milan v Ajax	
	Real Madrid v Auxerre	

Group H

Oct 19
Arsenal (Eng) 5 (Song 19, Nasri 42, Fabregas pen 60, Wilshere 66, Chamakh 69)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 1 (Eduardo 82)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 60,016. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Arsenal: Fabianski - Eboue, Squillaci, Djourou, Clichy, Song, Wilshere, Rosicky, Fabregas (Denilson 63), Nasri (Arshavin 72), Chamakh (Walcott 72).
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Kucher, Rakytskyi, Rat, Hai (Jadson 68), Hubschman, Mkhitaryan, Alex Teixeira, Willian (Douglas Costa 46), Luiz Adriano (Eduardo 63).

Oct 19
Braga (Por) 2 (Lima 35, Matheus 90)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,454. **Ref:** Duhamel (Fra)
Braga: Felipe - Silvio, Moises, Paulao, Elderson, Vandinho, Madrid (Aguiar 73), Alan, Paulo Cesar (Leandro Salino 69), Matheus, Lima (Mossoro 87).
Partizan: Stojkovic - Miljkovic, Savic, Krstajic, Lazevski, Tomic (Babovic 89), Moreira (Medo 46), Smiljanic, S Ilic, Scepovic (Boya 54), Cleo.

Nov 3
Partizan Belgrade 0
Braga 1 (Moises 36)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,295. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Partizan: Stojkovic - Jovanovic, Krstajic, Lazevski, Moreira, Petrovic, S Ilic, Boya (Babovic 59), Cleo, Iliev (Scepovic 78).
Braga: Felipe - Silvio, Moises, Rodriguez, Elderson, Vandinho, Aguiar, Alan (Madrid 68), Mossoro (Leandro Salino 51), Paulo Cesar, Matheus (Lima 88).

Nov 3
Shakhtar Donetsk 2 (Eastmond og 28, Eduardo 45)
Arsenal 1 (Walcott 10)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 51,153. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Chygrynskyi, Rakytskyi, Rat, Hai (Alex Teixeira 62), Hubschman, Jadson (Douglas Costa 74), Eduardo, Willian, Luiz Adriano (Moreno 88).
Arsenal: Fabianski - Eboue, Squillaci, Djourou, Clichy, Eastmond (Vela 59), Wilshere, Walcott (Emmanuel-Thomas 82), Rosicky, Nasri, Bendtner (Chamakh 73).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	4	3	0	1	15	4	9
Shakhtar	4	3	0	1	7	6	9
Braga	4	2	0	2	3	9	6
Partizan	4	0	0	4	1	7	0

Sep 15	Arsenal v Braga	6-0
	Shakhtar v Partizan	1-0
Sep 28	Braga v Shakhtar	0-3
	Partizan v Arsenal	1-3
Oct 19	Arsenal v Shakhtar	5-1
	Braga v Partizan	2-0
Nov 3	Partizan v Braga	0-1
	Shakhtar v Arsenal	2-1
Nov 23	Braga v Arsenal	
	Partizan v Shakhtar	
Dec 8	Arsenal v Partizan	
	Shakhtar v Braga	

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round; the third-placed teams enter Europa League at 1st knockout round stage

EUROPA LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 21: Manchester City (Eng) 3 Lech Poznan (Pol) 1; Salzburg (Aut) 1 Juventus (Ita) 1.
Nov 4: Juventus 0 Salzburg 0; Lech Poznan 3 Manchester City 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lech Poznan	4	2	1	1	9	7	7
Man City	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Juventus	4	0	4	0	5	5	4
Salzburg	4	0	2	2	1	5	2

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: Lech Poznan v Juventus; Manchester City v Salzburg.
Dec 16: Juventus v Manchester City; Salzburg v Lech Poznan.

Group B

Oct 21: Aris Salonika (Gre) 0 Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 0; Atletico Madrid (Spa) 3 Rosenborg (Nor) 0.
Nov 4: Bayer Leverkusen 1 Aris Salonika 0; Rosenborg 1 Atletico Madrid 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Leverkusen	4	2	2	0	6	1	8
At Madrid	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Aris	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
Rosenborg	4	1	0	3	3	10	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: Atletico Madrid v Aris Salonika; Rosenborg v Bayer Leverkusen.
Dec 16: Aris Salonika v Rosenborg; Bayer Leverkusen v Atletico Madrid.

Group C

Oct 21: Lille (Fra) 1 Levski Sofia (Bul) 0; Sporting Lisbon (Por) 5 Gent (Blg) 1.
Nov 4: Gent 3 Sporting Lisbon 1; Levski Sofia 2 Lille 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting	4	3	0	1	13	5	9
Lille	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Levski Sofia	4	1	1	2	5	10	4
Gent	4	1	1	2	7	10	4

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: Gent v Levski Sofia; Sporting Lisbon v Lille.
Dec 16: Levski Sofia v Sporting Lisbon; Lille v Gent.

Group D

Oct 21: Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 0 Club Brugge (Blg) 0; Villarreal (Spa) 1 PAOK Salonika (Gre) 0.
Nov 4: Club Brugge 0 Dinamo Zagreb 2; PAOK Salonika 1 Villarreal 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PAOK	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
Dinamo Zagreb	4	2	1	1	4	1	7
Villarreal	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
Club Brugge	4	0	2	2	2	5	2

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: PAOK Salonika v Club Brugge; Villarreal v Dinamo Zagreb.
Dec 15: Club Brugge v Villarreal; Dinamo Zagreb v PAOK Salonika.

Group E

Oct 21: AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 1 Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 2; Sheriff (Mol) 0 BATE Borisov (Bls) 1.
Nov 4: BATE Borisov 3 Sheriff 1; Dynamo Kyiv 2 AZ Alkmaar 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BATE Borisov	4	3	1	0	10	4	10
Dynamo Kyiv	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
AZ Alkmaar	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Sheriff	4	1	0	3	4	6	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: BATE Borisov v Dynamo Kyiv; Sheriff v AZ Alkmaar.
Dec 15: AZ Alkmaar v BATE Borisov; Dynamo Kyiv v Sheriff.

Group F

Oct 21: Palermo (Ita) 0 CSKA Moscow (Rus) 3; Sparta Prague (Cze) 3 Lausanne (Swi) 3.
Nov 4: CSKA Moscow 3 Palermo 1; Lausanne 1 Sparta Prague 3.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA Moscow	4	4	0	0	12	1	12
Sparta Prague	4	2	1	1	9	9	7
Palermo	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Lausanne	4	0	1	3	4	10	1

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: CSKA Moscow v Lausanne; Palermo v Sparta Prague.
Dec 15: Lausanne v Palermo; Sparta Prague v CSKA Moscow.

Group G

Oct 21: Anderlecht (Blg) 3 AEK Athens (Gre) 0; Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 2 Hajduk Split (Cro) 0.
Nov 4: AEK Athens 1 Anderlecht 1; Hajduk Split 2 Zenit St Petersburg 3.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	4	4	0	0	12	5	12
Anderlecht	4	1	1	2	5	5	4
AEK	4	1	1	2	6	9	4
Hajduk	4	1	0	3	4	8	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: Hajduk Split v AEK Athens; Zenit St Petersburg v Anderlecht.
Dec 16: AEK Athens v Zenit St Petersburg; Anderlecht v Hajduk Split.

Group H

Oct 21: Stuttgart (Ger) 1 Getafe (Spa) 0; Young Boys (Swi) 4 OB Odense (Den) 2.
Nov 4: Getafe 0 Stuttgart 3; OB Odense 2 Young Boys 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	4	4	0	0	9	1	12
Young Boys	4	2	0	2	6	7	6
Getafe	4	1	0	3	2	7	3
OB Odense	4	1	0	3	6	8	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: OB Odense v Getafe; Young Boys v Stuttgart.
Dec 16: Getafe v Young Boys; Stuttgart v OB Odense.

BULGARIA

Five minutes of madness

Two red and five yellow cards were shown in a five-minute spell as the game between high-fliers Litex Lovech and Levski Sofia was held up due to an on-field brawl.

Lovech central defender Plamen Nikolov was given his marching orders along with Levski's Darko Tasevski in the first half of a game that Lovech eventually won 2-1, thanks to an 88th minute winner from Svetoslav Todorov. Levski's Veselin Minev was also hit by a plastic bottle thrown from the stands, but he was able to continue playing.

Meanwhile, CSKA Sofia sacked coach Gjore Jovanovski the day after their 2-0 Europa League defeat at home to Rapid Vienna. Sporting director Emil Kostadinov also left the club.

Gone...cup defeat cost Poklepovic his job

CROATIA

Split coaching changes

Hajduk Split sacked coach Stanko Poklepovic following a 1-0 defeat by Istra in the Croatian Cup.

Assistant coach Josko Spanjic took charge of the 2-1 victory over Hrvatski Dragovoljac, and Goran Vucevic has now taken over until a permanent replacement is found.

Group I

Oct 21: Debrecen (Hun) 1 PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 2; Metalist Kharkiv (Ukr) 2 Sampdoria (Ita) 1.
Nov 4: PSV Eindhoven 3 Debrecen 0; Sampdoria 0 Metalist Kharkiv 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Metalist	4	2	1	1	7	3	7
Sampdoria	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Debrecen	4	0	0	4	1	11	0

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 1: Metalist Kharkiv v Debrecen; Sampdoria v PSV Eindhoven.
Dec 16: Debrecen v Sampdoria; PSV Eindhoven v Metalist Kharkiv.

Group J

Oct 21: Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 1 Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 1; Karpaty Lviv (Ukr) 0 Sevilla (Spa) 1.
Nov 4: Paris Saint-Germain 0 Borussia Dortmund 0; Sevilla 4 Karpaty Lviv 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sevilla	4	3	0	1	6	1	9
PSG	4	2	2	0	4	1	8
B Dortmund	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Karpaty	4	0	0	4	3	11	0

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: Borussia Dortmund v Karpaty Lviv; Paris Saint-Germain v Sevilla.
Dec 15: Karpaty Lviv v Paris Saint-Germain; Sevilla v Borussia Dortmund.

Group K

Oct 21: Napoli (Ita) 0 Liverpool (Eng) 0; Utrecht (Hol) 1 Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 1.
Nov 4: Liverpool 3 Napoli 1; Steaua Bucharest 3 Utrecht 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	4	2	2	0	7	2	8
Steaua	4	1	2	1	8	9	5
Napoli	4	0	3	1	4	6	3
Utrecht	4	0	3	1	2	4	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: Steaua v Liverpool; Utrecht v Napoli.
Dec 15: Liverpool v Utrecht; Napoli v Steaua.

Group L

Oct 21: Besiktas (Tur) 1 Porto (Por) 3; CSKA Sofia (Bul) 0 Rapid Wien (Aut) 2.
Nov 4: Porto 1 Besiktas 1; Rapid Wien 1 CSKA Sofia 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Besiktas	4	2	1	1	5	5	7
Rapid Wien	4	1	0	3	4	7	3
CSKA Sofia	4	1	0	3	2	5	3

Remaining fixtures:
Dec 2: CSKA Sofia v Besiktas; Rapid Wien v Porto.
Dec 15: Besiktas v Rapid Wien; Porto v CSKA Sofia.

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round, in which they will be joined by the eight third-placed teams from the Champions League group stage

AUSTRIA

Oct 23: Kapfenberger 0 Sturm 4; Austria 4 LASK 1; Ried 1 Mattersburg 3.
Oct 24: Wiener Neustadt 1 Rapid 1; Wacker 0 Salzburg 1.
Oct 27: Salzburg 4 Wacker 0.
Oct 30: Austria 1 Wiener Neustadt 1; Sturm 2 Wacker 0; Mattersburg 0 Kapfenberger 1; LASK 0 Ried 3.
Oct 31: Salzburg 1 Rapid 1.
Nov 6: Wacker 2 Mattersburg 1; Ried 2 Austria 1; Kapfenberger 4 LASK 1.
Nov 7: Rapid 3 Sturm 1; Wiener Neustadt 1 Salzburg 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ried	14	9	0	5	23	13	27
Sturm	13	8	1	4	27	14	25
Wacker	14	7	3	4	21	14	24
Austria	14	6	4	4	21	15	22
W Neustadt	14	6	4	4	22	18	22
Salzburg	13	5	4	4	14	10	19
Rapid	14	5	4	5	17	18	19
Kapfenberger	14	5	3	6	16	20	18
Mattersburg	14	3	1	10	11	28	10
LASK	14	2	2	10	11	33	8

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

BELGIUM

Regular season

Oct 22: Kortrijk 1 Genk 0.
Oct 23: St Truiden 3 Charleroi 2; Mechelen 5 Germinal Beerschot 1; Lierse 0 Zulte Waregem 0; Cercle Brugge 2 Eupen 1.
Oct 24: Standard 2 Gent 1; Anderlecht 2 Westerlo 0; Lokeren 1 Club Brugge 0.
Oct 29: Charleroi 0 Kortrijk 0.
Oct 30: Gent 3 Mechelen 1; Germinal Beerschot 0 St Truiden 0; Zulte Waregem 1 Lokeren 1; Eupen 2 Lierse 2; Westerlo 2 Cercle Brugge 1.
Oct 31: Club Brugge 2 Standard 2; Genk 1 Anderlecht 2.
Nov 5: Westerlo 1 Genk 1.
Nov 6: Standard 1 Eupen 3; St Truiden 0 Zulte Waregem 3; Kortrijk 4 Germinal Beerschot 0; Mechelen 2 Charleroi 0; Lierse 2 Lokeren 2.
Nov 7: Anderlecht 2 Club Brugge 2; Cercle Brugge 0 Gent 1.

BELGIUM – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk	14	9	3	2	37	14	30
Anderlecht	14	8	4	2	29	11	28
Gent	14	9	1	4	27	20	28
Mechelen	14	7	4	3	21	17	25
Standard	14	7	3	4	27	20	24
Kortrijk	14	7	2	5	17	13	23
Lokeren	14	6	5	3	20	20	23
Cercle Brugge	14	6	4	4	18	18	22
Club Brugge	14	6	3	5	30	21	21
Westerlo	14	5	4	5	15	16	19
Z Waregem	14	3	7	4	21	20	16
Germinal B	14	3	4	7	10	23	13
St Truiden	14	3	2	9	9	29	11
Lierse	14	1	6	7	12	23	9
Eupen	14	2	2	10	16	27	8
Charleroi	14	1	4	9	9	26	7

30-round regular season (15x2) – top 6 will enter championship play-offs, 7th to 14th will enter Europa League place play-offs, bottom 2 will enter rel/prom play-offs (1 of them will definitely go down)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Borac	13	9	3	1	19	6	30
Zeljeznicar	13	8	1	4	24	11	25
Sarajevo	13	7	3	3	18	9	24
Siroki Brijeg	13	7	1	5	26	18	22
Rudar	13	5	5	3	14	13	20
Slavija	13	6	1	6	20	21	19
Zvijezda	13	5	4	4	13	14	19
Travnik	13	6	0	7	22	19	18
Olimpik	13	5	3	5	13	14	18
Leotar	13	5	2	6	13	23	17
Celik	13	4	4	5	14	12	16
Sloboda	13	4	3	6	11	14	15
Buducnost	13	3	5	5	12	15	14
Zrinjski	13	4	1	8	12	18	13
Velez	13	4	1	8	14	25	13
Drina	13	3	1	9	10	23	10

Standings on November 9
30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

BULGARIA

Oct 23: Montana 4 Cherno More 0; Slavia 0 Sliven 0; Beroe 1 Akademik 0; Pirin 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1; Kaliakra 1 Chernomorets 1.
Oct 24: Minyor 2 CSKA 4; Lokomotiv Sofia 2 Vidima-Rakovski 1.
Oct 25: Lovech 2 Levski 1.
Oct 30: Akademik 1 Pirin 0; Vidima-Rakovski 1 Kaliakra 0; Sliven 1 Montana 1; CSKA 3 Beroe 2; Levski 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2.
Oct 31: Cherno More 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Lovech 2 Slavia 0.
Nov 1: Chernomorets 0 Minyor 0.
Nov 6: Montana 0 Lovech 2; Minyor 2 Vidima-Rakovski 1; Beroe 0 Chernomorets 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 Akademik 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 3 Sliven 0.
Nov 7: Slavia 2 Levski 2; Kaliakra 4 Cherno More 0.
Nov 8: Pirin 0 CSKA 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lovech	13	9	4	0	23	8	31
Levski	13	8	2	3	28	15	26
Lok Sofia	13	8	1	4	27	14	25
Chernomorets	13	6	7	0	11	5	25
Lok Plovdiv	13	6	5	2	25	13	23
CSKA	13	6	4	3	20	14	22
Slavia	13	6	2	5	19	14	20
Beroe	13	5	4	4	13	14	19
Cherno More	13	6	0	7	14	21	18
Montana	13	4	4	5	15	15	16
Kaliakra	13	3	4	6	8	18	13
Akademik	13	3	2	8	9	19	11
Sliven	13	2	4	7	11	17	10
Pirin	13	2	4	7	9	19	10
Minyor	13	2	3	8	14	26	9
V-Rakovski	13	2	2	9	10	24	8

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated; 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

CROATIA

Oct 22: Hrvatski Dragovoljac 1 Zadar 4.
Oct 23: Varazdin 2 Istra 1; Split 1 Inter 1; Rijeka 1 Osijek 5; Karlovac 1 Lokomotiva 2; Slaven 1 Zagreb 2.
Oct 24: Dinamo 1 Sibenik 0; Cibalia 2 Hajduk 1.
Oct 30: Lokomotiva 0 Slaven 0; Istra 1 Karlovac 0; Sibenik 1 Rijeka 1; Hajduk 2 Hrvatski Dragovoljac 1; Osijek 0 Varazdin 0; Inter 0 Dinamo 3; Zadar 1 Split 0; Zagreb 0 Cibalia 2.
Nov 6: Hrvatski Dragovoljac 0 Split 4; Rijeka 0 Inter 2; Varazdin 2 Sibenik 2; Slaven 2 Istra 1; Cibalia 2 Lokomotiva 1; Karlovac 1 Osijek 0.
Nov 7: Dinamo 1 Zadar 0; Hajduk 4 Zagreb 1.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	14	11	2	1	30	8	35
Hajduk	14	9	4	1	33	11	31
Cibalia	14	8	3	3	20	9	27
Split	14	8	2	4	19	8	26
Varazdin	14	6	5	3	15	15	23
Rijeka	14	6	3	5	17	19	21
Slaven	14	6	2	6	13	13	20
Zagreb	14	6	2	6	16	17	20
Inter	14	6	2	6	13	16	20
Karlovac	14	6	1	7	14	14	19
Osijek	14	4	5	5	17	17	17
Zadar	14	5	1	8	18	22	16
Lokomotiva	14	4	3	7	11	22	15
Sibenik	14	3	5	6	14	15	14
Istra	14	1	3	10	8	26	6
H Dragovoljac	14	0	3	11	6	32	3

30-round season (15x2); bottom 5 will be relegated

CYPRUS

Regular season

Oct 23: APOP 1 Ethnikos 0; APOEL 1 AEK 0; ENP 0 Anorthosis 0; Alki 1 Doxa 1.
Oct 24: AEL 0 Omonia 0; Olympiakos 2 Apollon 1.
Oct 25: Ermis 2 AEP 2.
Oct 30: Ethnikos 0 APOEL 1; Doxa 2 Anorthosis 2; Apollon 3 AEL 0.
Oct 31: AEK 1 Olympiakos 1; AEP 0 ENP 1; Omonia 4 Ermis 1.
Nov 1: Alki 0 APOP 0.
Nov 6: APOP 1 Doxa 1; ENP 0 Omonia 1; Ermis 2 Apollon 2; Olympiakos 3 Ethnikos 2.
Nov 7: APOEL 1 Alki 0; AEL 1 AEK 2.
Nov 8: Anorthosis 1 AEP 1.

CYPRUS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
APOEL	9	7	1	1	15	3	22
Anorthosis	9	5	3	1	19	9	18
Omonia	9	5	2	2	14	8	17
AEK	9	5	2	2	14	10	17
ENP	9	3	3	3	6	5	12
Olympiakos	9	2	5	2	14	15	11
APOP	9	3	2	4	7	11	11
Apollon	9	3	1	5	15	15	10
Ethnikos	9	3	1	5	10	13	10
Doxa	9	2	4	3	8	13	10
Ermis	9	2	3	4	10	17	9
AEP	9	1	5	3	11	13	8
Alki	9	2	2	5	9	15	8
AEL	9	1	4	4	8	13	7

26-round regular season (13x2) – top 4 will enter championship play-offs, 5th to 8th will enter "placement" play-offs, 9th to 12th will enter relegation play-offs (1 of them will be relegated). Bottom 2 (13th & 14th places) will be relegated automatically

CZECH REPUBLIC

Oct 22: Teplice 2 Hradec Kralove 1.
Oct 23: Pribram 0 Usti nad Labem 0; Mlada Boleslav 4 Plzen 3.
Oct 24: Brno 7 Slovacko 0; Ostrava 1 Jablonec 3; Olomouc 3 Bohemians 1905 1; Slavia 4 Ceske Budejovice 0.
Oct 25: Liberec 1 Sparta 2.
Oct 29: Plzen 4 Teplice 2.
Oct 30: Pribram 1 Slavia 1; Bohemians 1905 0 Sparta 1.

worldmags

Scorer...Vingaard

8 Premier League own goals scored by Richard Dunne of Aston Villa, the record holder

DENMARK

Copenhagen march on

Goals from Cesar Santin, Martin Vingaard, Cristian Bolanos and Mathias Jorgensen saw Copenhagen beat Horsens 4-0 to maintain their unbeaten league record and stretch their lead at the top of the table to 16 points. Second and third respectively, Midtjylland and Brondby lost further ground on the leaders as they drew 2-2.

FRANCE

Arles' first victory

Twelve games into the league campaign, Arles-Avignon registered their first win of the season, beating fellow Ligue 1 newboys Caen 3-2.

Paris Saint-Germain were equally happy after goals from Mevlut Erding and Guillaume Hoarau gave the club from the capital a 2-1 victory over Marseille and enabled them to

Home sweet home...Erding

Oct 31: Hradec Kralove 1 Olomouc 0; Ceske Budejovice 1 Brno 0; Usti nad Labem 0 Ostrava 4; Slovacko 0 Liberec 1.
Nov 1: Jablonec 1 Mlada Boleslav 1.
Nov 5: Slavia 0 Jablonec 3.
Nov 6: Liberec 3 Hradec Kralove 0; Ostrava 0 Plzen 2.
Nov 7: Brno 0 Pribram 1; Mlada Boleslav 2 Slovacko 3; Olomouc 5 Ceske Budejovice 1; Teplice 0 Bohemians 1905 2.
Nov 8: Sparta 4 Usti nad Labem 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plzen	15	13	1	1	42	14	40
Sparta	15	10	1	4	25	11	31
Olomouc	15	8	4	3	29	10	28
Jablonec	15	7	3	5	26	16	24
M Boleslav	15	6	6	3	25	19	24
Teplice	15	7	3	5	20	20	24
Liberec	15	5	4	6	20	20	19
Slovacko	15	6	1	8	17	25	19
C Budejovice	15	4	6	5	12	23	18
H Kralove	15	4	5	6	12	18	17
Pribram	15	4	5	6	9	15	17
Boh'ians 1905	15	4	4	7	17	20	16
Slavia	15	3	6	6	16	21	15
Ostrava	15	4	3	8	16	22	15
Brno	15	4	0	11	19	31	12
Usti	15	2	6	7	11	31	12

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

DENMARK

Oct 23: Midtjylland 2 Esbjerg 2.
Oct 24: AaB 2 Nordsjaelland 0; Silkeborg 0 Copenhagen 3; Lyngby 0 Horsens 2; Brondby 2 Randers 1.
Oct 25: OB 1 SonderjyskE 2.
Oct 30: Copenhagen 3 Lyngby 2; Randers 0 AaB 0.
Oct 31: Horsens 0 Midtjylland 2; SonderjyskE 1 Silkeborg 2; Esbjerg 1 Brondby 2.
Nov 1: Nordsjaelland 1 OB 4.
Nov 6: AaB 1 Esbjerg 1.
Nov 7: Silkeborg 1 Nordsjaelland 0; Lyngby 1 SonderjyskE 0; Copenhagen 4 Horsens 0; Brondby 2 Midtjylland 2.
Nov 8: OB 1 Randers 0.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen	15	13	2	0	39	10	41
Midtjylland	15	7	4	4	25	15	25
Brondby	15	6	5	4	24	21	23
OB	15	7	2	6	25	23	23
Lyngby	15	6	3	6	22	26	21
Silkeborg	15	5	5	5	20	22	20
SonderjyskE	15	6	1	8	17	20	19
Horsens	15	5	2	8	11	23	17
Esbjerg	15	3	6	6	19	25	15
Nordsjaelland	15	4	3	8	15	23	15
Randers	15	2	8	5	14	18	14
AaB	15	3	5	7	15	20	14

33-round season (11x3); bottom 2 will be relegated

ENGLAND

Saturday, October 23

Birmingham 2 (Ridgewell 36, Zigic 56)
Blackpool 0 Att: 26,850

Chelsea 2 (Malouda 23, Kalou 81)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 41,752

Sunderland 1 (Dunne og 25)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 41,506

Tottenham 1 (Van der Vaart 20)
Everton 1 (Baines 17) Att: 35,967

West Bromwich 2 (Mulumbu 17, Fortune 40)
Fulham 1 (Carson og 9) Att: 25,625

West Ham 1 (Cole 12)
Newcastle 2 (Nolan 23, Carroll 69) Att: 34,486

Wigan 1 (Rodallega 59)
Bolton 1 (Elmander 66) Att: 17,100

Sunday, October 24

Liverpool 2 (Kyrgiakos 48, Fernando Torres 53)
Blackburn 1 (Carragher og 51) Att: 43,328

Manchester City 0
Arsenal 3 (Nasri 20, Song 66, Bendtner 88) Att: 47,393

Stoke 1 (Tuncay 81)
Manchester United 2 (Hernandez 27, 86) Att: 27,372

Saturday, October 30

Arsenal 1 (Song 88)
West Ham 0 Att: 60,086

Blackburn 1 (Benjani 21)
Chelsea 2 (Anelka 39, Ivanovic 84) Att: 25,836

Everton 1 (Yakubu 67)
Stoke 0 Att: 35,513

Fulham 2 (Dempsey 30, 44)
Wigan 0 Att: 25,448

Manchester United 2 (Vidic 31, Nani 84)
Tottenham 0 Att: 75,223

Wolverhampton 2 (Milijas 30, Edwards 57)
Manchester City 1 (Adebayor pen 23) Att: 25,971

Sunday, October 31

Aston Villa 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 40,688

Bolton 0
Liverpool 1 (Rodriguez 86) Att: 25,171

Newcastle 5 (Nolan 26, 34, 75, Ameobi pen 45, 70)
Sunderland 1 (Bent 90) Att: 51,988

Monday, November 1

Blackpool 2 (Adam pen 12, Varney 62)
West Bromwich 1 (Mulumbu 85) Att: 15,210

Saturday, November 6

Birmingham 2 (Jerome 64, Ridgewell 73)
West Ham 2 (Piquionne 48, Behrami 58) Att: 26,474

Blackburn 2 (Gamst Pedersen 58, Roberts 67)
Wigan 1 (N'Zogbia 74) Att: 24,413

Blackpool 2 (Eardley 10, Vaughan 48)
Everton 2 (Cahill 13, Coleman 50) Att: 16,094

Bolton 4 (K Davies 31, pen 76, Steinsson 56, Petrov 90+4)
Tottenham 2 (Hutton 79, Pavlyuchenko 87) Att: 20,255

Fulham 1 (Hangeland 90+4)
Aston Villa 1 (Albrighton 41) Att: 23,654

Manchester United 2 (Park 45, 90+2)
Wolverhampton 1 (Ebanks-Blake 66) Att: 75,285

Sunderland 2 (Gyan 9, 86)
Stoke 0 Att: 36,541

Sunday, November 7

Arsenal 0
Newcastle 1 (Carroll 45) Att: 60,059

Liverpool 2 (Fernando Torres 11, 44)
Chelsea 0 Att: 44,238

West Bromwich 0
Manchester City 2 (Balotelli 20, 26) Att: 23,013

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	11	8	1	2	27	5	25
Man United	11	6	5	0	24	13	23
Arsenal	11	6	2	3	22	11	20
Man City	11	6	2	3	15	10	20
Newcastle	11	5	2	4	20	14	17
Bolton	11	3	6	2	17	16	15
Tottenham	11	4	3	4	13	14	15
Sunderland	11	3	6	2	11	12	15
Liverpool	11	4	3	4	12	14	15
West Brom	11	4	3	4	14	19	15
Everton	11	3	5	3	12	10	14
Blackpool	11	4	2	5	17	23	14
Fulham	11	2	7	2	13	12	13
Aston Villa	11	3	4	4	10	14	13
Birmingham	11	2	6	3	12	14	12
Blackburn	11	3	3	5	11	13	12
Stoke	11	3	1	7	10	16	10
Wigan	11	2	4	5	8	20	10
Wolves	11	2	3	6	11	18	9
West Ham	11	1	4	6	9	20	7

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

LEADING GOALSCORERS

7	Florent Malouda (Chelsea)
7	Kevin Nolan (Newcastle)
7	Carlos Tevez (Manchester City)
6	Darren Bent (Sunderland)
6	Dimitar Berbatov (Manchester United)
6	Andy Carroll (Newcastle)
6	Didier Drogba (Chelsea)

ESTONIA

ESTONIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flora	36	29	4	3	104	32	91
Levadia	36	26	8	2	100	16	86
Trans	36	23	7	6	67	31	76
Kalju	36	18	8	10	59	42	62
Sillamae	36	18	5	13	79	52	59
Tammeka	36	11	7	18	50	66	40
Tulevik	36	8	5	23	33	62	29
Paide	36	6	7	23	30	79	25
Kuressaare*	36	7	3	26	32	93	24
Lootus (R)	36	6	2	28	22	103	20

Promoted: Ajax Lasnamae (3rd in 2nd level**)
Kuressaare go into relegation/promotion play-off against Tamme Auto (4th in 2nd level)*
***The top two in the 2nd level, Levadia II and Flora II, were ineligible for promotion as they are reserve teams for top level clubs*

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROE ISLANDS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HB	27	16	6	5	49	32	54
EB/Streymur	27	14	9	4	65	30	51
NSI	27	14	6	7	60	33	48
IF	27	12	7	8	50	41	43
Vikingur	27	12	7	8	44	35	43
B36	27	11	7	9	44	36	40
B68	27	8	7	12	42	47	31
B71	27	5	8	14	24	65	23
Suduroy (R)	27	5	7	15	33	54	22
AB (R)	27	2	8	17	27	65	14

Promoted: 07 Vestur, KI

FAROESE CUP

Final

Aug 6 - Klaksvik
EB/Streymur 1 (Anghel 25)
IF 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,544. **Ref:** Djurhuus

FINLAND

Oct 23: Honka 1 Inter 1; Tampere 2 HJK 0; JJK 1 Haka 2; Mariehamn 1 KuPS 2; Jaro 1 Oulu 2; MyPa 2 VPS 2; TPS 3 Lahti 2.

FINLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK	26	15	7	4	43	19	52
KuPS	26	15	3	8	45	36	48
TPS	26	13	6	7	46	30	45
Honka	26	12	5	9	42	34	41
Jaro	26	11	5	10	42	34	38
Inter	26	10	7	9	34	32	37
Tampere	26	10	4	12	37	46	34
Haka	26	9	6	11	30	38	33
MyPa	26	7	11	8	36	39	32
VPS	26	8	7	11	29	40	31
Oulu	26	8	6	12	31	44	30
Mariehamn	26	7	7	12	38	43	28
JJK*	26	8	3	15	34	41	27
Lahti (R)	26	5	11	10	26	37	26

Promoted: RoPS (1st in 2nd level)
**JJK beat Viikingit (2nd in 2nd level) 3-1 on agg in the relegation/promotion play-off to stay up*

FINNISH CUP

Final

Sep 25 - Helsinki
HJK 0
TPS 2 (Aaritalo 34, Riski 90+1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,137. **Ref:** Pohjonen

FRANCE

Saturday, October 23

Bordeaux 0
Brest 2 (Poyet 6, Lesoimier 80) Att: 26,490

Lens 1 (Jemaa 90)
Nice 0 Att: 29,436

Monaco 0
Valenciennes 2 (Pujol 32, 52) Att: 5,121

Nancy 1 (Feret 8)
Lorient 0 Att: 14,614

Rennes 0
Montpellier 1 (Marveaux 43) Att: 22,688

leapfrog their bitter rivals into third place.

Erding, who celebrated his goal by revealing a T-shirt with the message "*Paris est magique*" (Paris is magical), said: "I hold it close to my heart to beat OM. It's extraordinary. I came here to play in matches like that."

Lucho Gonzalez scored for the visitors, whose fans were banned after crowd trouble at recent meetings.

GERMANY

Cup shocks

Borussia Dortmund and Mainz may be the top two in the Bundesliga, but they both crashed out of the German Cup in the second round, 4-2 on penalties to third-division Kickers Offenbach and 2-1 at second division Alemannia Aachen respectively.

Hannover defender Karim Haggui was sent off for the second time in just over a month. He was dismissed in the 1-0 win over St Pauli at the start of October and again in the 4-0 defeat by Borussia Dortmund in November.

Claudio Pizarro became the highest scoring non-German in Bundesliga history when he scored in Werder Bremen's 4-1 win at Borussia Monchengladbach. The goal was the Peru striker's 134th in the competition.

Cup upset...Kickers Offenbach

GREECE

Panionios in trouble

Super League strugglers Panionios sacked coach Mikael Stahre after they were knocked out of the Greek Cup by second-tier Diagoras.

They beat AEK 1-0 next time out, Sito Riera scoring after missing a first-half penalty, but it was business as usual as they were then thrashed 5-0 by Olympiakos.

Saint-Etienne 1 (Riviere 82)
Caen 1 (El Arabi 38) Att: 31,715

Sochaux 1 (Tulasne 90+1)
Toulouse 3 (Congre 73, 89, Cetto 80) Att: 11,198

Sunday, October 24
Arles-Avignon 1 (Dja Djedje 36)
Lyon 1 (Briand 46) Att: 11,547

Lille 1 (Cabaye 26)
Marseille 3 (Remy 53, 80, Gonzalez 71) Att: 17,305

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Nene 1, pen 68)
Auxerre 3 (Mignot 4, Contout 11, Quercia 24) Att: 27,523

Saturday, October 30
Auxerre 2 (Birsa 43, Pedretti 78)
Nice 0 Att: 9,262

Brest 2 (Licka 77, Poyet 84)
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 14,526

Caen 2 (El Arabi 13, Traore 52)
Nancy 3 (Hadji pen 36, Tafforeau og 39, Traore 70) Att: 14,106

Lorient 2 (Gameiro 55, Kitambala 77)
Arles-Avignon 0 Att: 15,758

Lyon 2 (Michel Bastos 31, Lacazette 69)
Sochaux 1 (Brown 66) Att: 34,022

Toulouse 1 (Machado pen 5)
Lens 1 (Yahia 28) Att: 16,457

Sunday, October 31
Montpellier 1 (Estrada 42)
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Giuly 37) Att: 19,967

Valenciennes 1 (Pujol 87)
Lille 1 (Penneteau og 86) Att: 12,391

Tuesday, November 2
Monaco 2 (Park 49, Coutadeur 65)
Bordeaux 2 (Traore og 10, Jussie 74) Att: 5,105

Saturday, November 6
Arles-Avignon 3 (Germany 24, Diawara 33, pen 76)
Caen 2 (El Arabi 10, Traore 66) Att: 7,430

Bordeaux 1 (Maazou 86)
Valenciennes 1 (Ducourtioux 18) Att: 21,679

Rennes 1 (Kembo-Ekoko 5)
Lyon 1 (Michel Bastos 54) Att: 28,357

Saint-Etienne 1 (Sako 56)
Lorient 2 (Gameiro 22, 82) Att: 27,861

Sochaux 1 (Maiga 82)
Auxerre 1 (Sammaritano 24) Att: 11,020

Sunday, November 7
Lens 2 (Hermach 7, Akale 41)
Montpellier 0 Att: 30,502

Lille 3 (Sow 41, Gervinho 51, Hazard 76)
Brest 1 (Poyet 61) Att: 16,205

Nancy 0
Monaco 4 (Gavanon og 55, Loties og 62, Park 81, 87) Att: 14,745

Nice 2 (Ljuboja 18, Ben Saada 90+3)
Toulouse 0 Att: 7,636

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Erdinc 9, Hoarau 19)
Marseille 1 (Gonzalez 23) Att: 40,234

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brest	12	6	3	3	12	7	21
Rennes	11	5	5	1	13	6	20
PSG	12	5	4	3	18	11	19
Marseille	11	5	3	3	19	13	18
Lille	12	4	6	2	17	13	18
Saint-Etienne	12	5	3	4	16	14	18
Toulouse	12	5	3	4	14	13	18
Montpellier	12	5	3	4	11	12	18
Lorient	12	5	2	5	13	12	17
Bordeaux	12	4	4	4	12	12	16
Lyon	12	4	4	4	14	15	16
Nice	12	4	4	4	11	14	16
Auxerre	12	3	6	3	17	14	15
Valenciennes	12	3	6	3	13	12	15
Sochaux	12	4	2	6	19	17	14
Caen	12	3	5	4	13	15	14
Nancy	12	4	2	6	13	22	14
Monaco	12	2	7	3	13	11	13
Lens	12	3	4	5	11	18	13
Arles-Avignon	12	1	2	9	7	25	5

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Youssef El Arabi (Caen)
8 Dimitri Payet (Saint-Etienne)
6 Kevin Gameiro (Lorient)
6 Nene (Paris Saint-Germain)
6 Gregory Pujol (Valenciennes)
6 Moussa Sow (Lille)

GERMANY

Friday, October 22
Hamburg 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 57,000

Saturday, October 23
Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Schalke 0 Att: 51,500

Freiburg 2 (Cisse 35, Reisinger 60)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Moravek 8) Att: 24,000

Hannover 2 (Ya Konan 4, 15)
Koln 1 (Lanig 85) Att: 44,214

Monchengladbach 1 (Mertesacker og 67)
Werder Bremen 4 (Marin 5, Wesley 12, Hunt 51, Pizarro 75) Att: 53,511

Nurnberg 2 (Gundogan 11, Frantz 63)
Wolfsburg 1 (Grafite 28) Att: 40,127

Sunday, October 24
Bayer Leverkusen 0
Mainz 1 (Ivanschitz 70) Att: 30,210

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Da Silva 90+3)
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Ba 9) Att: 80,720

Stuttgart 2 (Niedermeier 19, Kuzmanovic 79)
St Pauli 0 Att: 40,000

Friday, October 29
Bayern Munich 4 (Demichelis 39, Gomez 61, Tymoshchuk 72, Kroos 80)
Freiburg 2 (Reisinger 64, Braafheid og 87) Att: 69,000

Saturday, October 30
Kaiserslautern 3 (Tiffert 71, Nemec 83, Lakic 88)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 49,167

Koln 3 (Novakovic 11, 29, 84)
Hamburg 2 (Petric 15, Son 24) Att: 50,000

Schalke 0
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Sam 65) Att: 61,673

St Pauli 1 (Zambrano 5)
Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Gekas pen 42, 70, Caio 90) Att: 24,330

Werder Bremen 2 (Hugo Almeida 5, Pizarro 90+2)
Nurnberg 3 (Gundogan 45, 73, Ekici 47) Att: 35,500

Wolfsburg 2 (Dzeko 6, 76)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 29,043

Sunday, October 31
1899 Hoffenheim 4 (Sigurdsson 45, pen 48, Ba 51, Mlapa 71)
Hannover 0 Att: 28,450

Mainz 0
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Gotze 26, Barrios 67) Att: 20,300

Friday, November 5
Schalke 3 (Raul 14, 81, Huntelaar 53)
St Pauli 0 Att: 61,673

Saturday, November 6
Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Gekas 26, pen 55, Schwegler 38)
Wolfsburg 1 (Dejagah 66) Att: 43,800

Freiburg 1 (Cisse pen 64)
Mainz 0 Att: 22,400

Hamburg 2 (Westermann 45, Petric 83)
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Salihovic pen 6) Att: 54,162

Monchengladbach 3 (Herrmann 5, Reus 56, De Camargo 60)
Bayern Munich 3 (Gomez 11, Schweinsteiger 40, Lahm 84) Att: 54,057

Nurnberg 3 (Hegeler 11, Gundogan 43, Schieber 90)
Koln 1 (Geromel 16) Att: 41,789

Sunday, November 7
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Sam 38, 84, Helmes 68)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Dick 15) Att: 29,794

Hannover 0
Borussia Dortmund 4 (Kagawa 11, Barrios 72, Lewandowski 81, Blaszczykowski 90+1) Att: 49,000

Stuttgart 6 (Marica 10, Cacau 31, 45, Gentner 68, Niedermeier 73, Boka 86)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 39,500

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Dortmund	11	9	1	1	27	7	28
Mainz	11	8	0	3	19	11	24
B Leverkusen	11	6	3	2	22	16	21
E Frankfurt	11	6	1	4	20	11	19
Hoffenheim	11	5	3	3	22	15	18
Hamburg	11	5	3	3	17	15	18
Nurnberg	11	5	3	3	17	15	18
Freiburg	11	6	0	5	17	18	18
Bayern	11	4	4	3	15	13	16
Hannover	11	5	1	5	13	20	16
Werder	11	4	2	5	19	27	14
Wolfsburg	11	4	1	6	18	19	13
St Pauli	11	4	1	6	12	18	13
Stuttgart	11	3	1	7	22	19	10
Kaiserslautern	11	3	1	7	14	21	10
Schalke	11	2	3	6	13	17	9
Koln	11	2	2	7	13	22	8
M'gladbach	11	1	4	6	17	33	7

34-round season (17x2); bottom 2 will be relegated; 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Theofanis Gekas (Eintracht Frankfurt)
9 Papiss Demba Cisse (Freiburg)
7 Edin Dzeko (Wolfsburg)

GREECE

Oct 23: Atromitos 1 Xanthi 1; Asteras 0 Iraklis 0; Volos 1 Larissa 1.
Oct 24: Kavala 3 Ergotelis 1; Panserraikos 0 Kerkyra 2; PAOK 3 Panionios 1; Olympiakos 1 Aris 0; AEK 1 Panathinaikos 0.
Oct 30: Larissa 3 Xanthi 0; Aris 2 Atromitos 0; Panathinaikos 2 Olympiakos 1.
Oct 31: Panserraikos 1 Kavala 0; Kerkyra 1 Asteras 2; Iraklis 0 Volos 0; Ergotelis 1 PAOK 2; Panionios 1 AEK 0.
Nov 6: Asteras 0 Panserraikos 2; Xanthi 2 Iraklis 2; Volos 1 Kerkyra 0; Olympiakos 5 Panionios 0.
Nov 8: Kavala 0 PAOK 1; Aris 1 Larissa 1; AEK 3 Ergotelis 1; Atromitos 0 Panathinaikos 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	9	7	0	2	20	5	21
Panathinaikos	9	6	2	1	14	7	20
AEK	9	5	1	3	15	9	16
PAOK	9	4	2	3	10	8	14
Volos	9	3	4	2	10	9	13
Asteras	9	3	4	2	8	9	13
Aris	9	4	1	4	6	8	13
Kerkyra	9	3	3	3	10	9	12
Kavala	9	3	3	3	9	8	12
Iraklis	9	2	6	1	7	6	12
Larissa	9	2	4	3	7	7	10
Panserraikos	9	3	1	5	8	11	10
Ergotelis	9	3	0	6	7	14	9
Atromitos	9	1	4	4	8	13	7
Xanthi	9	1	4	4	6	13	7
Panionios	9	2	1	6	6	15	7

30-round season (15x2); bottom 3 will be relegated. Teams finishing 2nd to 5th will enter play-offs for Greece's 2nd Champions League place

HOLLAND

Oct 22: NAC 1 Roda JC 2.
Oct 23: De Graafschap 1 Heracles 1; NEC 3 Groningen 2; Heerenveen 2 VVV 0.
Oct 24: Excelsior 2 Ajax 2; PSV 10 Feyenoord 0; Twente 3 Den Haag 2; AZ 3 Willem II 0; Vitesse 1 Utrecht 4.
Oct 26: Roda JC 1 NEC 1; Heracles 4 NAC 1.

worldmags

High fliers...Twente

HOLLAND

Up and down for PSV

A week after thrashing Feyenoord 10-0, PSV suffered their first league defeat of the season as reigning champions Twente won 1-0 at the Philips Stadion to climb above the Eindhoven club at the top of the table. It was Twente's first win away in Eindhoven for 37 years.

In the Dutch Cup, third-division side Sparta Nijkerk provided the biggest surprise in the round of 16 by beating top-flight outfit Excelsior 2-1.

ITALY

Gasperini gone from Genoa

Genoa parted company with coach Gian Piero Gasperini and replaced him with Davide Ballardini after their 1-0 defeat at Palermo. The club's third loss in four games left them just three points off the bottom of Serie A.

KAZAKHSTAN

Tobol are top

Tobol Kostanay won their first-ever league title with a 2-0 victory at Atyrau on the last day of the season, despite suffering a five-match winless drought and a 5-2 defeat at home to closest rivals Aktobe in the end of season run-in.

LITHUANIA

Three in a row

Valdas Urbonas has won his third consecutive league title since taking over as coach of Ekranas in 2008.

Ekranas, who play in the town of Panevezys and also won this season's Lithuanian Cup, clinched their sixth overall

Oct 27: Groningen 3 Den Haag 1; Ajax 3 Heerenveen 1; De Graafschap 2 AZ 1; Willem II 1 Twente 3; Feyenoord 3 VVV 0; Vitesse 0 PSV 2; Utrecht 2 Excelsior 0.
Oct 30: VVV 3 Groningen 5; NAC 2 De Graafschap 0; Excelsior 0 Heerenveen 2; Heracles 1 Ajax 4; PSV 0 Twente 1.
Oct 31: Den Haag 1 Utrecht 0; NEC 0 Vitesse 0; Roda JC 2 Willem II 2; AZ 2 Feyenoord 1.
Nov 5: Willem II 1 VVV 4.
Nov 6: Twente 2 Excelsior 1; Groningen 2 NAC 1; Heerenveen 3 Heracles 2; De Graafschap 1 NEC 4.
Nov 7: Ajax 0 Den Haag 1; Utrecht 1 PSV 2; Vitesse 1 AZ 1; Feyenoord 1 Roda JC 1.

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Twente	13	9	4	0	25	9	31
PSV	13	9	3	1	39	10	30
Ajax	13	8	3	2	33	14	27
Groningen	13	8	3	2	27	17	27
Roda JC	13	6	6	1	23	16	24
AZ	13	6	4	3	17	13	22
Den Haag	13	6	3	4	23	23	21
Utrecht	13	6	1	6	21	19	19
Heerenveen	13	5	4	4	20	18	19
NEC	13	5	3	5	24	22	18
NAC*	13	5	2	6	16	19	16
De Graafschap	13	3	4	6	16	29	13
Heracles	13	3	3	7	21	24	12
Feyenoord	13	3	3	7	17	27	12
Excelsior	13	3	2	8	15	25	11
Vitesse	13	2	4	7	11	25	10
VVV	13	3	0	10	14	26	9
Willem II	13	0	2	11	12	38	2

34-round season (17x2); bottom team will be relegated; 2nd & 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs
**1pt deducted for financial mismanagement*

HUNGARY

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fehervar	13	9	2	2	29	15	29
Zalaegerszeg	13	8	2	3	26	18	26
Debrecen	13	7	3	3	27	17	24
Papa	13	7	1	5	24	20	22
Ferencvaros	13	7	1	5	20	19	22
Paks	13	6	3	4	21	17	21
Honved	13	6	3	4	18	14	21
Kaposvar	13	6	2	5	19	18	20
Ujpest	13	4	4	5	22	18	16
Gyor	13	4	4	5	16	15	16
Vasas	13	5	1	7	20	26	16
MTK	13	4	3	6	16	20	15
Siofok	13	3	5	5	12	17	14
Kecskemet	13	4	0	9	22	33	12
Szombathely	13	2	4	7	15	21	10
Szolnoki	13	2	2	9	8	27	8

Standings on November 9
30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

ICELAND

ICELANDIC CUP

Final

Aug 14 - Reykjavik
FH 4 (Vilhjalmsson pen 35, pen 41, Bjornsson 75, Gudnason 86)
KR 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,438. **Ref:** Eiriksson

ISRAEL

Regular season

Oct 23: Maccabi Tel Aviv 2 Ramat Gan 0; Acre 3 Bnei Yehuda 1; Kiryat Shmona 2 Ashkelon 2; Netanya 1 Hapoel Haifa 1; Be'er Sheva 0 Hapoel Petah Tikva 0; Maccabi Haifa 1 Ashdod 1.
Oct 24: Maccabi Petah Tikva 1 Hapoel Tel Aviv 2.
Oct 25: Beitar 0 Bnei Sakhnin 0.
Oct 30: Ashdod 3 Beitar 0; Acre 3 Kiryat Shmona 0; Ashkelon 0 Netanya 4; Ramat Gan 0 Maccabi Petah Tikva 2; Bnei Yehuda 2 Bnei Sakhnin 0; Hapoel Tel Aviv 3 Be'er Sheva 2.
Oct 31: Hapoel Petah Tikva 0 Maccabi Haifa 1.
Nov 1: Hapoel Haifa 0 Maccabi Tel Aviv 0.
Nov 6: Beitar 0 Hapoel Petah Tikva 2; Kiryat Shmona 2 Bnei Yehuda 2; Maccabi Petah Tikva 2 Hapoel Haifa 3; Be'er Sheva 2 Ramat Gan 0; Bnei Sakhnin 0 Ashdod 2; Maccabi Tel Aviv 2 Ashkelon 0.
Nov 7: Netanya 1 Acre 3.
Nov 8: Maccabi Haifa 0 Hapoel Tel Aviv 2.

ISRAEL – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
M Tel Aviv	9	6	1	2	13	4	19
H Tel Aviv	9	6	1	2	20	12	19
Kiryat Shmona	9	5	3	1	20	13	18
M Haifa	9	5	3	1	13	10	18
Acre	9	4	3	2	18	12	15
Netanya	9	4	3	2	16	10	15
Be'er Sheva	9	4	2	3	11	10	14
H Haifa	9	4	2	3	12	12	14
M Petah Tikva	9	4	1	4	16	13	13
Ashdod	9	3	3	3	13	13	12
Bnei Yehuda	9	3	3	3	10	11	12
Ashkelon	9	2	4	3	9	16	10
H Petah Tikva	9	1	3	5	9	16	6
Beitar	9	1	2	6	11	18	5
Bnei Sakhnin	9	0	2	7	4	17	2
Ramat Gan*	9	1	2	6	5	13	1

30-round regular season (15x2) – top 6 will enter championship play-offs, 7th to 10th will enter "placement" play-offs, bottom 6 will enter relegation play-offs (2 teams will go down)
**4pts deducted for contract irregularities*

ITALY

Saturday, October 23
Fiorentina 2 (Donadel 34, Gilardino 82)
Bari 1 (Parisi 90+1) Att: 23,874

Sunday, October 24
Bologna 0
Juventus 0 Att: 28,785

Chievo 2 (Cesar 31, Thereau 90+1)
Cesena 1 (Guana og 45) Att: 9,800

Genoa 1 (Rossi 68)
Catania 0 Att: 21,858

Internazionale 1 (Eto'o 80)
Sampdoria 1 (Guberti 62) Att: 56,415

Lazio 2 (Floccari 21, Mauri 53)
Cagliari 1 (Matri 59) Att: 32,417

Lecce 2 (Ofere 54, Di Michele 61)
Brescia 1 (Caracciolo 19) Att: 6,837

Parma 0
Roma 0 Att: 13,937

Udinese 2 (Benatia 9, Di Natale pen 54)
Palermo 1 (Pinilla 83) Att: 14,714

Monday, October 25
Napoli 1 (Lavezzi 78)
Milan 2 (Robinho 22, Ibrahimovic 71) Att: 53,901

Friday, October 29
Genoa 0
Internazionale 1 (Muntari 45+3) Att: 30,000

Saturday, October 30
Milan 1 (Ibrahimovic 82)
Juventus 2 (Quagliarella 24, Del Piero 65) Att: 80,000

Roma 2 (N Burdisso 62, Vucinic 76)
Lecce 0 Att: 28,000

Sunday, October 31
Bari 0
Udinese 2 (Sanchez 16, Isla 60) Att: 15,701

Brescia 0
Napoli 1 (Lavezzi 77) Att: 6,008

Cagliari 2 (Nene 50, Nainggolan 78)
Bologna 0 Att: 10,000

Catania 0
Fiorentina 0 Att: 13,990

Cesena 0
Sampdoria 1 (Pazzini 90+2) Att: 14,844

Palermo 0
Lazio 1 (Dias 27) Att: 29,539

Parma 0
Chievo 0 Att: 13,562

Saturday, November 6
Bologna 2 (Di Vaio 84, Gimenez 85)
Lecce 0 Att: 14,000

Internazionale 1 (Eto'o pen 72)
Brescia 1 (Caracciolo 14) Att: 45,000

Sunday, November 7
Bari 2 (Kutuzov 65, Barreto 89)
Milan 3 (Ambrosini 4, Flamini 31, Alexandre Pato 72) Att: 35,780

Fiorentina 1 (Cerci 80)
Chievo 0 Att: 21,236

Juventus 3 (Del Piero pen 31, Quagliarella 43, Iaquinta 87)
Cesena 1 (Jimenez 11) Att: 20,534

Lazio 0
Roma 2 (Borriello pen 52, Vucinic pen 87) Att: 52,121

Napoli 2 (Cavani 19, 86)
Parma 0 Att: 26,931

Palermo 1 (Pinilla 42)
Genoa 0 Att: 24,368

Sampdoria 0
Catania 0 Att: 20,778

Udinese 1 (Floro Flores 44)
Cagliari 1 (Conti 12) Att: 14,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lazio	10	7	1	2	13	8	22
Milan	10	6	2	2	17	10	20
Inter	10	5	4	1	12	5	19
Juventus	10	5	3	2	21	11	18
Napoli	10	5	3	2	17	11	18
Sampdoria	10	3	6	1	11	8	15
Roma	10	4	3	3	11	12	15
Palermo	10	4	2	4	16	13	14
Chievo	10	4	2	4	11	10	14
Udinese	10	4	2	4	9	11	14
Fiorentina	10	3	3	4	10	10	12
Cagliari	10	2	5	3	11	9	11
Catania	10	2	5	3	8	8	11
Genoa	10	3	2	5	8	11	11
Bologna	10	2	5	3	10	14	11
Lecce	10	3	2	5	7	17	11
Brescia	10	3	1	6	9	13	10
Parma	10	1	5	4	6	10	8
Cesena	10	2	2	6	7	14	8
Bari	10	2	2	6	9	18	8

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Edinson Cavani (Napoli)
8 Samuel Eto'o (Internazionale)
6 Marco Di Vaio (Bologna)
5 Alexandre Pato (Milan)
5 Alessandro Matri (Cagliari)
5 Fabio Quagliarella (Juventus)

LATVIA

LATVIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Skonto	27	22	3	2	86	16	69
Ventspils	27	20	3	4	68	18	63
Metalurgs	27	19	4	4	70	20	61
Daugava	27	16	8	3	35	16	56
Jurmala-VV	27	8	4	15	30	45	28
Jelgava	27	6	7	14	36	45	25
Blazma	27	7	3	17	27	57	24
Olimps/RFS	27	5	6	16	31	63	21
Tranzit (R)*	27	5	4	18	17	56	19
Jauniba (R)	27	4	4	19	16	80	16

Promoted: Gulbene 2005, FC Jurmala (top 2 in 2nd level)
**Tranzit withdrew from relegation/promotion play-off against FC Jurmala, meaning the latter were promoted*

MALTA

MALTA – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valletta	7	5	2	0	19	6	17
Marsaxlokk	7	3	3	1	10	7	12
Hamrun	7	3	1	3	14	13	10
Floriana	7	3	1	3	6	7	10
Tarxien	7	3	1	3	9	11	10
Birkirkara	7	2	3	2	12	13	9
Qormi	7	2	2	3	7	8	8
Sliema	7	2	2	3	6	11	8
Hibernians	7	1	3	3	11	13	6
Vittoriosa	7	1	2	4	5	10	5

Standings on November 9
18-round regular season (9x2) – top 6 will form championship group, bottom 4 will form relegation group (bottom 2 will go down)

championship when beating Siauliai 2-1, in front of a season-best crowd of 4,700, with goals from Egidijus Varnas and Deimantas Bicka.

Former powerhouse FBK Kaunas, who have won the Lithuanian league title a record 10 times, will return to the top flight next year after winning all 27 of their games in the second tier this season. The club had been demoted to the third tier in 2009.

Return...Bakero

POLAND
Bakero back in work

Jose Maria Bakero, who was sacked as coach of Polonia Warsaw in September, has replaced Jacek Zielinski at Lech Poznan.

PORTUGAL
Great turnaround

Guimaraes made a remarkable recovery and scored three times in the final 13 minutes to come from 2-0 down and win 3-2 at Sporting Lisbon, Targinho (twice) and Bruno Telles scoring for the visitors.

RUSSIA
Zenit beaten at last

Zenit lost for the first time in the Premier League this season, going down 1-0 to a penalty from Spartak Moscow's Dmitri Kombarov.

Winner...Kombarov (left)

MOLDOVA

MOLDOVA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dacia	15	9	6	0	22	7	33
Olimpia	15	9	4	2	30	11	31
Iskra-Stal	15	8	6	1	25	7	30
Sheriff	15	8	6	1	23	5	30
Milsami	15	8	5	2	25	8	29
Zimbru	15	7	6	2	15	7	27
Academica	14	6	5	3	20	9	23
CSCA-Rapid	15	6	4	5	10	11	22
Tiraspol	14	5	1	8	19	25	16
Nistru	15	3	2	10	10	21	11
Dinamo	15	3	2	10	8	36	11
Gagauzia	15	2	2	11	16	30	8
Costuleni	15	2	2	11	10	37	8
S Gheorghe	15	1	3	11	11	30	6

Standings on November 9
39-round season (13x3); bottom team will be relegated

MONTENEGRO

MONTENEGRO	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mogren	13	10	2	1	31	11	32
Buducnost	13	8	4	1	26	15	28
Rudar	13	7	3	3	15	8	24
Decic	13	6	3	4	11	10	21
Zeta	13	5	5	3	13	8	20
Mladost	13	4	5	4	16	15	17
Grbalj	13	4	3	6	11	13	15
Lovcen	13	3	5	5	13	15	14
Sutjeska	13	3	3	7	14	19	12
Mornar	13	3	2	8	7	22	11
Petrovac	13	2	4	7	10	20	10
Bar	13	1	5	7	11	22	8

Standings on November 9
33-round season (11x3); bottom team will be relegated; 2nd & 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Linfield	15	10	4	1	32	9	34
Glentoran	15	9	2	4	28	12	29
Crusaders	15	8	2	5	32	31	26
L Distillery	15	7	4	4	25	23	25
Cliftonville	14	7	3	4	19	16	24
Ballymena	15	6	5	4	23	21	23
Newry	16	5	3	8	21	24	18
Coleraine	15	6	0	9	14	20	18
Dungannon	15	4	5	6	20	26	17
Glenavon	15	4	2	9	22	28	14
Portadown	15	4	2	9	19	30	14
D'gal Celtic	15	3	2	10	26	41	11

Standings on November 9
33-round regular season (11x3) – top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group (bottom team will go down automatically, 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off)

NORWAY

Oct 23: Valerenga 2 Lillestrom 1.
Oct 24: Sandefjord 0 Haugesund 1; Start 3 Stabaek 2; Stromsgodset 4 Honefoss 1; Viking 1 Aalesund 3; Molde 0 Odd Grenland 0; Rosenborg 1 Tromso 0.
Oct 25: Brann 3 Kongsvinger 1.
Oct 31: Lillestrom 1 Viking 1; Stabaek 2 Sandefjord 1; Tromso 2 Stromsgodset 1; Honefoss 3 Valerenga 1; Kongsvinger 0 Rosenborg 0; Haugesund 1 Molde 2; Odd Grenland 2 Start 1; Aalesund 3 Brann 1.
Nov 7: Sandefjord 6 Honefoss 1; Start 3 Haugesund 3; Brann 1 Odd Grenland 1; Stromsgodset 5 Lillestrom 4; Viking 3 Kongsvinger 1; Rosenborg 2 Aalesund 2; Molde 1 Stabaek 0; Valerenga 3 Tromso 0.

NORWAY – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	30	19	11	0	58	24	68
Valerenga	30	19	4	7	69	36	61
Tromso	30	14	8	8	36	30	50
Aalesund	30	14	5	11	46	37	47
Odd Grenland	30	12	10	8	48	41	46
Haugesund	30	12	9	9	51	39	45
Stromsgodset	30	13	4	13	51	59	43
Start	30	11	9	10	57	60	42
Viking	30	10	11	9	48	41	41
Lillestrom	30	9	13	8	51	44	40
Molde	30	10	10	10	42	45	40
Stabaek	30	11	6	13	46	47	39
Brann	30	8	10	12	48	50	34
Honefoss*	30	7	6	17	28	62	27
Kongsvinger (R)	30	4	8	18	27	58	20
Sandefjord (R)	30	2	6	22	25	58	12

Promoted: Sogndal, Sarpsborg (top 2 in 2nd level)
**Honefoss go into relegation/promotion play-offs with Fredrikstad, Lov-Ham and Ranheim (3rd to 5th respectively in 2nd level)*

POLAND

Oct 22: Polonia Bytom 0 Slask 0; Korona 1 Legia 4.
Oct 23: Polonia Warsaw 3 Cracovia 0; Arka 1 Belchatow 0; Wisla 5 Lechia 2; Widzew 4 Jagiellonia 1.
Oct 24: Gornik 2 Lech 0; Zaglebie 0 Ruch 0.
Oct 29: Belchatow 1 Widzew 0; Jagiellonia 1 Polonia Warsaw 0.
Oct 30: Ruch 0 Arka 0; Lechia 0 Korona 1; Cracovia 0 Polonia Bytom 1; Slask 3 Zaglebie 1.
Oct 31: Lech 4 Wisla 1; Legia 2 Gornik 1.
Nov 5: Cracovia 0 Wisla 1; Zaglebie 1 Widzew 0.
Nov 6: Gornik 1 Polonia Bytom 1; Legia 2 Jagiellonia 0; Belchatow 0 Slask 1; Arka 2 Korona 1.
Nov 7: Polonia Warsaw 1 Lechia 2; Ruch 1 Lech 0.

POLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jagiellonia	12	8	1	3	17	10	25
Korona	12	7	2	3	18	14	23
Legia	12	7	0	5	15	15	21
Lechia	12	6	2	4	18	12	20
Belchatow	12	6	1	5	13	12	19
Gornik	12	6	1	5	13	16	19
Wisla	12	5	3	4	15	15	18
Polonia W	11	4	4	3	16	11	16
Ruch	12	4	4	4	10	9	16
Arka	12	4	4	4	7	7	16
Zaglebie	12	4	3	5	9	13	15
Widzew	12	3	5	4	16	13	14
Polonia B	12	3	5	4	11	14	14
Slask	12	3	4	5	13	17	13
Lech	11	3	2	6	13	12	11
Cracovia	12	1	1	10	9	23	4

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

PORTUGAL

Oct 23: Academica 2 Nacional 1; Pacos Ferreira 1 Beira Mar 1; Setubal 2 Guimaraes 1; Braga 3 Olhanense 1.
Oct 24: Maritimo 1 Naval 0; Sporting 1 Rio Ave 0; Portimonense 0 Benfica 1.
Oct 25: Porto 5 Uniao Leiria 1.
Oct 29: Benfica 2 Pacos Ferreira 0.
Oct 30: Rio Ave 2 Braga 0; Academica 0 Porto 1.
Oct 31: Nacional 1 Setubal 0; Beira Mar 3 Naval 1; Olhanense 1 Maritimo 1; Uniao Leiria 1 Sporting 2.
Nov 1: Guimaraes 2 Portimonense 0.
Nov 5: Setubal 3 Rio Ave 3.
Nov 6: Pacos Ferreira 0 Nacional 1; Portimonense 2 Academica 2.
Nov 7: Maritimo 1 Uniao Leiria 1; Naval 1 Olhanense 1; Braga 2 Beira Mar 3; Porto 5 Benfica 0.
Nov 8: Sporting 2 Guimaraes 3.

PORTUGAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	10	9	1	0	25	4	28
Guimaraes	10	5	3	2	14	10	18
Benfica	10	6	0	4	13	11	18
Nacional	10	5	1	4	12	12	16
Academica	10	4	3	3	17	13	15
Sporting	10	4	3	3	11	10	15
Braga	10	4	2	4	16	14	14
Olhanense	10	3	5	2	10	9	14
Beira Mar	10	3	5	2	11	11	14
Setubal	10	3	4	3	8	11	13
Uniao Leiria	10	3	3	4	8	12	12
P Ferreira	10	2	5	3	9	11	11
Maritimo	10	1	5	4	5	8	8
Portimonense	10	2	2	6	10	17	8
Rio Ave	10	1	4	5	8	13	7
Naval	10	1	2	7	6	17	5

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Oct 22: UCD 1 Sligo 2; St Patrick's 2 Bray 0; Galway 3 Bohemians 2; Dundalk 0 Fingal 2; Shamrock 2 Drogheda 0.
Oct 29: Bohemians 3 Dundalk 1; Bray 2 Shamrock 2; Drogheda 3 Galway 3; Sligo 1 St Patrick's 0; Fingal 4 UCD 1.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamrock	36	19	10	7	57	34	67
Bohemians	36	19	10	7	50	29	67
Sligo	36	17	12	7	61	36	63
Fingal	36	16	14	6	60	38	62
St Patrick's	36	16	9	11	55	33	57
Dundalk	36	14	6	16	46	50	48
UCD	36	11	8	17	47	54	41
Galway*	36	9	11	16	38	59	38
Bray*	36	6	9	21	35	72	27
Drogheda (R)	36	4	9	23	30	74	21

Promoted: Derry City (1st in 2nd level)
**Galway beat Bray 1-0 in the relegation play-off to retain their top level place. Bray then beat Monaghan United (3rd in 2nd level) 7-6 on penalties after a 1-1 aggregate draw to also retain their top level place. Monaghan had earlier beaten Waterford United (2nd in 2nd level) in a play-off for the right to play the relegation play-off losers*

ROMANIA

Oct 22: Victoria 1 Brasov 1; Timisoara 2 Univ Cluj 2; Gloria 0 Dinamo 2.
Oct 23: Gaz Metan 0 Otelul 2; Astra 0 Tirgu-Mures 0; Univ Craiova 0 Vaslui 1.
Oct 24: Sportul 0 Rapid 2; CFR 3 Urziceni 0.
Oct 25: Steaua 2 Pandurii 0.
Oct 29: Vaslui 1 Victoria 0; Dinamo 3 Gaz Metan 2.
Oct 30: Otelul 1 CFR 1.
Oct 31: Tirgu-Mures 4 Sportul 1; Gloria 1 Steaua 0; Brasov 0 Timisoara 0.
Nov 1: Univ Cluj 1 Astra 0; Urziceni 1 Univ Craiova 2; Rapid 1 Pandurii 1.
Nov 5: Gaz Metan 2 Gloria 1; Univ Craiova 0 Otelul 1.
Nov 6: Pandurii 4 Tirgu-Mures 1; Astra 3 Brasov 0; Timisoara 2 Vaslui 1.
Nov 7: Sportul 2 Univ Cluj 0; CFR 1 Dinamo 0.
Nov 8: Victoria 4 Urziceni 1; Rapid 0 Steaua 0.

ROMANIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Otelul	14	10	2	2	19	10	32
Timisoara	14	7	7	0	24	17	28
Rapid	14	7	5	2	24	8	26
Vaslui	14	7	3	4	20	16	24
Dinamo	14	7	2	5	32	25	23
Steaua	14	6	4	4	19	13	22
Gaz Metan	14	6	4	4	18	13	22
Univ Craiova	14	5	4	5	19	14	19
CFR	14	5	4	5	22	20	19
Univ Cluj	14	5	3	6	19	25	18
Astra	14	3	7	4	15	16	16
Victoria	14	4	4	6	19	24	16
Tirgu-Mures	14	4	3	7	16	25	15
Gloria	14	3	4	7	15	19	13
Pandurii	14	3	4	7	12	19	13
Brasov	14	2	7	5	10	19	13
Urziceni	14	3	4	7	8	18	13
Sportul	14	3	1	10	18	28	10

34-round season (17x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

RUSSIA

Oct 23: Sibir 0 Spartak Moscow 0; Alania 0 Dynamo 0; Spartak Nalchik 2 Tom 1; Saturn 1 Terek 0.
Oct 24: Amkar 1 Lokomotiv 2; CSKA 0 Rubin 0; Anzhi 3 Zenit 3; Rostov 1 Krylia Sovetov 2.
Oct 27: Dynamo 0 CSKA 0; Spartak Moscow 1 Zenit 0.
Oct 29: Krylia Sovetov 0 Rubin 2.
Oct 30: Dynamo 4 Sibir 1; Spartak Moscow 2 Rostov 1.
Oct 31: Tom 1 Amkar 0; Terek 1 Spartak Nalchik 1; Zenit 3 Alania 0; Anzhi 0 Lokomotiv 1; Saturn 1 CSKA 1.
Nov 5: Spartak Nalchik 2 Saturn 0.
Nov 6: Amkar 2 Terek 0; Anzhi 1 Tom 0; Rostov 1 Dynamo 1.
Nov 7: Sibir 2 Zenit 5; Alania 0 Lokomotiv 0; CSKA 4 Krylia Sovetov 3.
Nov 8: Rubin 1 Spartak Moscow 1.

RUSSIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	26	19	6	1	53	16	63
Rubin	27	15	10	2	33	12	55
CSKA	26	16	6	4	44	19	54
Spartak M	27	13	8	6	41	29	47
Spartak N	27	12	7	8	37	30	43
Lokomotiv	27	12	7	8	31	27	43
Dynamo	27	9	11	7	35	27	38
Rostov	27	10	4	13	25	34	34
Terek	27	8	8	11	25	28	32
Tom	27	8	6	13	30	41	30
Saturn	27	7	8	12	22	34	29
Anzhi	27	7	6	14	22	35	27
Krylia Sovetov	27	6	8	13	27	40	26
Amkar	27	7	4	16	19	32	25
Alania	27	6	7	14	21	38	25
Sibir	27	4	6	17	32	55	18

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

worldmags

Derby delight...Miller (centre)

SCOTLAND

Gers gain advantage

Rangers ended Celtic's 100 per cent league record this season – and at the same time maintained their own – with a 3-1 win over their Glasgow rivals at Celtic Park.

Gary Hooper had put the home side ahead on the stroke of half-time, but an own goal by Glenn Loovens and two strikes from former Celtic player Kenny Miller gave Rangers the points.

Rangers dropped their first points of the season next time out, with a 1-1 draw against Inverness.

And although it was to be no consolation for losing at home to Rangers, Celtic did later set a new Scottish Premier League record with a 9-0 thrashing of Aberdeen – the worst defeat in the visitors' 107-year history.

SPAIN

Madrid top dogs

Real Madrid beat Atletico Madrid 2-0 with goals from Ricardo Carvalho and Mesut Ozil to maintain their single-point lead at the top of La Liga and stretch their unbeaten run over their city rivals to more than a decade.

At the other end of the table, Real Zaragoza moved off the bottom as they beat

SCOTLAND

Regular season

Oct 23: Aberdeen 4 Hibernian 2; Hamilton 1 St Johnstone 2; Hearts 3 St Mirren 0; Kilmarnock 1 Inverness 2; Motherwell 2 Dundee United 1.
Oct 24: Celtic 1 Rangers 3.
Oct 30: St Johnstone 0 Celtic 3; Dundee United 1 Hibernian 0; Motherwell 0 Hamilton 1; Rangers 1 Inverness 1; St Mirren 2 Aberdeen 1.
Oct 31: Hearts 0 Kilmarnock 3.
Nov 6: Celtic 9 Aberdeen 0; Hamilton 0 Dundee United 1; Inverness 1 Motherwell 2; St Johnstone 0 Kilmarnock 3.
Nov 7: St Mirren 1 Rangers 3; Hibernian 0 Hearts 2.

SCOTLAND – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	11	10	1	0	29	10	31
Celtic	11	10	0	1	31	7	30
Motherwell	11	6	1	4	16	13	19
Hearts	11	5	2	4	16	13	17
Dundee Utd	11	5	2	4	12	16	17
Inverness	11	4	3	4	15	12	15
Kilmarnock	11	4	1	6	16	14	13
St Johnstone	11	3	2	6	9	16	11
Aberdeen	11	3	1	7	14	24	10
Hamilton	11	2	3	6	10	21	9
Hibernian	11	2	2	7	10	20	8
St Mirren	11	2	2	7	11	23	8

33-round regular season (11x3) – top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group (1 will be relegated)

SERBIA

Oct 23: Red Star 0 Partizan 1; Javor 2 Cukaricki 0; BSK 1 Metalac 0; Jagodina 0 Sloboda Sevojno 1; Smederevo 1 Hajduk 1; Borac 0 Indjija 0.
Oct 24: Spartak 1 Rad 2; Vojvodina 0 OFK 0.
Oct 30: Borac 0 Spartak 0; OFK 2 Smederevo 2; Sloboda Sevojno 2 BSK 1; Metalac 1 Javor 3; Indjija 0 Cukaricki 0; Partizan 3 Jagodina 0.
Oct 31: Rad 1 Vojvodina 0; Hajduk 2 Red Star 0.
Nov 6: Cukaricki 1 Metalac 2; Javor 1 Sloboda Sevojno 0; Jagodina 3 Hajduk 0; Vojvodina 4 Borac 0; Spartak 5 Indjija 2; Red Star 1 OFK 0.
Nov 7: BSK 0 Partizan 3; Smederevo 0 Rad 0.

SERBIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	11	9	1	1	23	6	28
Red Star	11	8	1	2	14	5	25
Rad	11	7	3	1	14	5	24
Vojvodina	11	6	4	1	14	2	22
Spartak	11	4	5	2	13	9	17
S Sevojno	11	4	5	2	8	8	17
Jagodina	11	4	3	4	10	10	15
OFK	11	4	3	4	10	10	15
Javor	11	3	5	3	8	7	14
Smederevo	11	2	7	2	12	10	13
Borac	11	2	6	3	6	12	12
Indjija	11	2	4	5	10	14	10
BSK	11	2	4	5	6	14	10
Hajduk	11	1	2	8	7	17	5
Metalac	11	1	2	8	5	16	5
Cukaricki	11	0	3	8	2	17	3

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

SLOVAKIA

Oct 23: Ruzomberok 0 Dubnica 1; Dukla 4 Kosice 1; Spartak 0 Zlate Moravce 0; Senica 1 Tatran 1; Nitra 0 DAC 1; Slovan 0 Zilina 1.
Oct 29: Zilina 3 Dukla 3.
Oct 30: Kosice 3 Nitra 0; Dubnica 0 Senica 1; Zlate Moravce 1 Slovan 1; DAC 3 Ruzomberok 0; Tatran 0 Spartak 0.
Nov 5: Dukla 0 Slovan 0.
Nov 6: Tatran 1 Zlate Moravce 0; Ruzomberok 2 Kosice 2; Nitra 0 Zilina 2; Spartak 4 Dubnica 0; Senica 1 DAC 1.

SLOVAKIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zilina	15	9	6	0	33	12	33
Spartak	15	7	6	2	21	7	27
Senica	15	8	3	4	17	14	27
Slovan	15	6	4	5	26	15	22
Dukla	15	5	6	4	18	12	21
Zlate Moravce	15	5	6	4	15	16	21
DAC	15	5	5	5	15	15	20
Ruzomberok	15	5	4	6	13	18	19
Nitra	15	5	3	7	13	23	18
Dubnica	15	4	2	9	13	30	14
Tatran	15	2	5	8	10	18	11
Kosice	15	2	4	9	12	26	10

33-round season (11x3); bottom team will be relegated

SLOVENIA

Oct 23: Nafta 0 Maribor 2; Olimpija 1 Celje 0; Gorica 2 Koper 2; Rudar 3 Primorje 1.
Oct 24: Triglav 1 Domzale 3.
Oct 27: Primorje 0 Triglav 3.
Oct 30: Celje 0 Maribor 4; Koper 2 Olimpija 0.
Oct 31: Triglav 2 Nafta 0; Primorje 0 Gorica 2; Domzale 2 Rudar 3.
Nov 6: Nafta 2 Celje 2; Gorica 0 Domzale 3; Rudar 5 Triglav 0; Maribor 2 Koper 0; Olimpija 3 Primorje 0.

SLOVENIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maribor	16	12	4	0	32	6	40
Domzale	16	10	2	4	25	12	32
Nafta	16	7	3	6	29	27	24
Rudar	16	6	4	6	28	26	22
Koper	16	6	3	7	19	21	21
Gorica	16	5	4	7	18	25	19
Olimpija	16	4	5	7	19	21	17
Triglav	16	4	5	7	17	32	17
Primorje	16	4	3	9	24	33	15
Celje	16	3	5	8	20	28	14

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated; 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

SPAIN

Saturday, October 23

Real Madrid 6 (Higuain 10, Cristiano Ronaldo 15, 27, 47, pen 55, Ozil 63)
Racing Santander 1 (Diop 73) Att: 60,000

Valencia 1 (Soldado pen 36)
Mallorca 2 (Castro pen 7, 28) Att: 40,000

Zaragoza 0
Barcelona 2 (Messi 42, 66) Att: 35,000

Sunday, October 24

Almeria 1 (Ulloa 84)
Hercules 1 (Valdez 38) Att: 10,167

Espanyol 2 (Datolo 13, Callejon 81)
Levante 1 (Stuani 84) Att: 20,000

Getafe 3 (Boateng 9, Colunga pen 51, Marcano 59)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 11,000

Osasuna 3 (Nekounam pen 2, Shojaei 37, Aranda 56)
Malaga 0 Att: 14,000

Sevilla 4 (Luis Fabiano 35, 62, Kanoute pen 45, pen 80)
Athletic Bilbao 3 (Llorente 74, 77, Gabilondo 90+3) Att: 40,000

Villarreal 2 (Cani 9, Rossi 52)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 21,000

Monday, October 25

Real Sociedad 3 (Llorente 17, Griezmann 70, Agirretxe 86)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 19,000

Saturday, October 30

Barcelona 5 (Messi 4, 64, Villa 24, 90, Daniel Alves 52)
Sevilla 0 Att: 81,020

Hercules 1 (Trezeguet 3)
Real Madrid 3 (Di Maria 52, Cristiano Ronaldo 82, 86) Att: 28,000

Valencia 1 (Lanzaro og 43)
Zaragoza 1 (Lanzaro 3) Att: 40,000

Sunday, October 31

Athletic Bilbao 3 (Iraola 6, San Jose pen 12, Gabilondo 83)
Getafe 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 1 (Aguero 33)
Almeria 1 (Piatti 45) Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 3 (Adrian 28, Lopo 76, Colotto 87)
Espanyol 0 Att: 10,000

Malaga 1 (Juanmi 77)
Real Sociedad 2 (Griezmann 43, Llorente 55) Att: 18,000

Racing Santander 4 (Bakircioglu 27, Rosenberg 35, 62, Torrejon 85)
Osasuna 1 (Nekounam pen 59) Att: 12,000

Sporting Gijon 1 (Diego Castro pen 69)
Villarreal 1 (Rossi pen 90+2) Att: 20,000

Monday, November 1

Mallorca 2 (Pereira 64, Webo 85)
Levante 1 (Stuani 26) Att: 11,000

Saturday, November 6

Espanyol 1 (Javi Marquez 1)
Malaga 0 Att: 22,040

Real Sociedad 1 (Llorente 7)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 23,000

Sunday, November 7

Almeria 1 (Corona 16)
Sporting Gijon 1 (Novo 73) Att: 9,693

Getafe 1 (Manu pen 70)
Barcelona 3 (Messi 23, Villa 34, Pedro 65) Att: 15,000

Levante 1 (Juanlu 73)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Riki 10, Aythami 52) Att: 10,000

Osasuna 3 (Monreal 40, Lolo 56, Vadocz 90+2)
Hercules 0 Att: 14,130

Real Madrid 2 (Ricardo Carvalho 13, Ozil 19)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 79,500

Villarreal 4 (Nilmar 39, Cazorla 45, Rossi 84, Montero 90+2)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Llorente 6) Att: 22,000

Zaragoza 3 (Lafita 57, Bertolo 84, Gabi pen 90+4)
Mallorca 2 (Webo 19, Pereira 61) Att: 21,000

Monday, November 8

Sevilla 2 (Negredo 54, Alfaro 77)
Valencia 0 Att: 30,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	10	8	2	0	27	5	26
Barcelona	10	8	1	1	22	7	25
Villarreal	10	7	2	1	21	8	23
Espanyol	10	6	0	4	9	13	18
Valencia	10	5	2	3	14	11	17
Sevilla	10	5	2	3	16	16	17
Real Sociedad	10	5	1	4	13	12	16
At Madrid	10	4	2	4	13	12	14
Mallorca	10	4	2	4	11	12	14
Ath Bilbao	10	4	1	5	18	18	13
Getafe	10	4	1	5	15	16	13
Osasuna	10	3	3	4	11	10	12
Sporting Gijon	10	2	4	4	10	16	10
R Santander	10	3	1	6	9	16	10
Dep Coruna	10	2	4	4	8	15	10
Almeria	10	1	6	3	8	9	9
Hercules	10	2	3	5	9	15	9
Levante	10	2	2	6	10	18	8
Zaragoza	10	1	4	5	10	17	7
Malaga	10	2	1	7	14	22	7

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

LEADING GOALSCORERS

12 Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
8 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
7 Fernando Llorente (Athletic Bilbao)
7 Giuseppe Rossi (Villarreal)
6 Nilmar (Villarreal)

Mallorca 3-2, claiming their first victory of the season with a stoppage-time penalty from Gabi.

UKRAINE

Dynamo hit nine

Dynamo Kiev set a new record with their 9-0 win over Illichevets Mariupol. Striker Artem Milevskiy scored four goals as Dynamo broke the league's previous biggest margin of victory, held by Shakhtar Donetsk when they beat FC Torpedo 9-1 in 1997.

WALES

City cup surprise

Bangor City, currently on a Welsh Premier League record of 13 straight wins at the start of a season, were beaten 9-0 by The New Saints in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final tie.

Fit again...Riquelme

ARGENTINA

Barren spell continues

Leonardo Madelon's first game as coach of Quilmes was the club's 1,000th in the Argentinian top flight. However, the occasion was marred by a 2-0 defeat by Banfield which increased the club's dreadful winless run to six months.

Bottom of the table, Quilmes' players were forced to train in the presence of a police guard after they were attacked by supporters following the latest defeat against Gimnasia.

After six months on the sidelines, Juan Roman Riquelme returned to action for Boca Juniors against Argentinos Juniors. Unfortunately, goals from Santiago Gentiletti and Ciro Rius ruined the 32-year-old's day as the visitors won 2-0.

SWEDEN

Oct 20: GAIS 0 Orebro 1.
Oct 24: Helsingborgs 3 Atvidabergs 0; Kalmar 1 Mjallby 1; Gefle 1 GAIS 0; Djurgardens 4 Elfsborg 4.
Oct 25: Orebro 1 Brommapojkarna 1; IFK 1 Trelleborgs 2; Halmstads 1 AIK 2.
Oct 27: Hacken 0 Malmo 4.
Oct 30: GAIS 1 Trelleborgs 3.
Oct 31: Kalmar 1 Hacken 3; Gefle 2 Djurgardens 2; Halmstads 2 Helsingborgs 4; AIK 2 Elfsborg 0.
Nov 1: Brommapojkarna 0 Malmo 4; Orebro 2 IFK 1; Mjallby 2 Atvidabergs 1.
Nov 7: Helsingborgs 0 Kalmar 0; Hacken 5 Brommapojkarna 0; Djurgardens 0 Halmstads 2; IFK 2 Gefle 2; Trelleborgs 1 Orebro 0; Elfsborg 1 GAIS 0; Atvidabergs 1 AIK 1; Malmo 2 Mjallby 0.

SWEDEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo	30	21	4	5	59	24	67
Helsingborgs	30	20	5	5	49	26	65
Orebro	30	16	4	10	40	30	52
Elfsborg	30	12	11	7	55	40	47
Trelleborgs	30	13	5	12	39	42	44
Mjallby	30	11	10	9	36	29	43
IFK	30	10	10	10	42	29	40
Hacken	30	11	7	12	40	42	40
Kalmar	30	10	10	10	36	38	40
Djurgardens	30	11	7	12	35	42	40
AIK	30	10	5	15	29	36	35
Halmstads	30	10	5	15	31	42	35
GAIS	30	8	8	14	24	35	32
Gefle*	30	7	8	15	33	46	29
Atvidabergs (R)	30	7	8	15	32	51	29
Bro'karna (R)	30	6	7	17	20	48	25

Promoted: Syrianska, Norrkoping (top 2 in 2nd level)
**Gefle go into relegation/promotion play-off against Sundsvall (3rd in 2nd level)*

SWITZERLAND

Oct 23: Xamax 2 Lucerne 1; Sion 1 Zurich 1.
Oct 24: Grasshopper 0 Thun 0; St Gallen 1 Basle 3; Young Boys 1 Bellinzona 1.
Oct 27: Zurich 2 Lucerne 2.
Oct 30: Basle 3 Bellinzona 1; Zurich 3 Xamax 1; Sion 4 Lucerne 1.
Oct 31: Young Boys 1 Grasshopper 0; St Gallen 2 Thun 1.
Nov 6: Bellinzona 1 Zurich 2; Thun 1 Sion 0.
Nov 7: Lucerne 1 Basle 1; Grasshopper 2 St Gallen 0; Xamax 2 Young Boys 4.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	14	7	5	2	30	19	26
Lucerne	14	7	4	3	34	20	25
Zurich	14	7	4	3	28	22	25
Young Boys	14	5	5	4	18	18	20
Sion	13	4	6	3	19	14	18
Thun	14	3	8	3	20	19	17
Xamax	14	4	2	8	21	30	14
Bellinzona	14	3	5	6	19	28	14
St Gallen	14	4	1	9	15	29	13
Grasshopper	13	2	6	5	13	18	12

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated; 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

TURKEY

Oct 22: Sivasspor 1 Bucaspor 1; Karabukspor 1 Eskisehirspor 2.
Oct 23: Istanbul BB 1 Gaziantepspor 0; Trabzonspor 3 Genclerbirligi 1; Antalyaspor 1 Konyaspor 0.
Oct 24: Ankaragucu 1 Bursaspor 5; Manisaspor 2 Kasimpasa 1; Fenerbahce 0 Galatasaray 0.
Oct 25: Kayserispor 1 Besiktas 0.
Oct 29: Bursaspor 1 Fenerbahce 1.
Oct 30: Eskisehirspor 0 Ankaragucu 0; Gaziantepspor 0 Karabukspor 0; Galatasaray 2 Antalyaspor 1.
Oct 31: Genclerbirligi 2 Manisaspor 0; Kasimpasa 1 Kayserispor 2; Bucaspor 0 Istanbul BB 2; Besiktas 2 Sivasspor 1.
Nov 1: Konyaspor 1 Trabzonspor 2.
Nov 5: Kayserispor 1 Genclerbirligi 1.
Nov 6: Karabukspor 3 Bucaspor 0; Antalyaspor 2 Bursaspor 2; Ankaragucu 0 Gaziantepspor 2; Fenerbahce 4 Eskisehirspor 2.
Nov 7: Sivasspor 0 Istanbul BB 4; Manisaspor 0 Konyaspor 1; Trabzonspor 2 Galatasaray 0.
Nov 8: Besiktas 1 Kasimpasa 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trabzonspor	11	8	2	1	27	8	26
Bursaspor	11	7	4	0	21	7	25
Kayserispor	11	7	3	1	17	6	24
Fenerbahce	11	6	3	2	29	14	21
Istanbul BB	11	6	1	4	15	9	19
Karabukspor	11	5	3	3	18	14	18
Antalyaspor	11	5	3	3	16	16	18
Besiktas	11	5	2	4	17	12	17
Galatasaray	11	5	1	5	14	15	16
Gaziantepspor	11	3	5	3	8	8	14
Ankaragucu	11	4	2	5	16	18	14
Manisaspor	11	4	0	7	15	20	12
Genclerbirligi	11	3	3	5	10	17	12
Eskisehirspor	11	2	4	5	9	14	10
Konyaspor	11	2	3	6	11	19	9
Bucaspor	11	1	4	6	5	13	7
Sivasspor	11	1	4	6	9	26	7
Kasimpasa	11	0	3	8	8	29	3

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

UKRAINE

Oct 22: Obolon 2 Tavriya 1.
Oct 23: Zorya 1 Kryvbas 0; Sevastopol 1 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0; Arsenal 1 Dnipro 2; Shakhtar 1 Vorskla 0.
Oct 24: Illichivets 1 Metalist 4; Volyn 1 Dynamo 2; Karpaty 2 Metalurh Donetsk 1.
Oct 30: Vorskla 1 Karpaty 1; Dnipro 0 Shakhtar 1; Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Zorya 0; Metalist 2 Obolon 1.
Oct 31: Tavriya 2 Sevastopol 1; Kryvbas 1 Arsenal 1; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Volyn 2; Dynamo 9 Illichivets 0.
Nov 5: Vorskla 0 Volyn 1.
Nov 6: Sevastopol 0 Zorya 1; Kryvbas 0 Shakhtar 2; Metalurh Zaporizhya 2 Arsenal 1.
Nov 7: Metalurh Donetsk 0 Illichivets 3; Dynamo 0 Obolon 2; Metalist 2 Tavriya 3; Karpaty 0 Dnipro 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	16	14	1	1	29	5	43
Dynamo	16	11	2	3	31	15	35
Metalist	16	10	1	5	30	17	31
Dnipro	16	8	4	4	23	10	28
Karpaty	16	7	4	5	18	15	25
Tavriya	16	6	3	7	26	26	21
Arsenal	16	6	3	7	19	19	21
Volyn	16	6	3	7	14	18	21
Vorskla	16	5	4	7	16	17	19
Zorya	16	4	6	6	16	20	18
Metalurh D	16	5	3	8	17	24	18
Obolon	16	5	3	8	14	22	18
Kryvbas	16	3	8	5	14	20	17
Illichivets	16	4	5	7	23	36	17
Sevastopol	16	3	5	8	12	24	14
Metalurh Z	16	2	3	11	7	21	9

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

WALES

WALES – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bangor	12	12	0	0	33	13	36
TNS	11	7	2	2	40	14	23
Neath	11	5	3	3	24	14	18
Aberystwyth	12	4	5	3	17	21	17
Carmarthen	12	5	2	5	21	26	17
Llanelli	12	4	3	5	16	19	15
Airbus UK	12	3	5	4	20	24	14
Prestatyn	12	3	4	5	14	16	13
Port Talbot	12	3	4	5	13	17	13
Newtown	12	2	6	4	10	18	12
Bala	12	2	2	8	10	22	8
Hav'fordwest	12	2	2	8	12	26	8

Standings on November 9
22-round regular season (11x2) – top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group (2 will go down)

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Last 16

1st legs - Sep 28-Oct 14; 2nd legs - Oct 12-21
Atletico Mineiro (Bra) v Independiente Santa Fe (Col)
2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)
Banfield (Arg) v Tolima (Col)
2-0, 0-3 (agg 2-3)
Defensor Sporting (Uru) v Independiente (Arg)
1-0, 2-4 (agg 3-4)
Emelec (Ecu) v Avai (Bra)
2-1, 1-3 (agg 3-4)
Goias (Bra) v Penarol (Uru)
1-0, 2-3 (agg 3-3; Goias on away goals)
Newell's Old Boys (Arg) v San Jose (Bol)
6-0, 0-2 (agg 6-2)
San Felipe (Chl) v LDU Quito (Ecu)
4-2, 1-6 (agg 5-8)
Universitario (Bol) v Palmeiras (Bra)
0-1, 1-3 (agg 1-4)

ARGENTINA

Apertura

Friday, October 22
Arsenal 1 (Leguizamon pen 34)
Godoy Cruz 3 (Rojas 57, Campestrini og 59, Carranza pen 90+2)

Velez Sarsfield 0
Estudiantes 0

Saturday, October 23
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Niell 82)
All Boys 0

Lanus 1 (Romero 67)
Colon 2 (Larrivey 40, Diaz 51)

Quilmes 0
Banfield 2 (Mendez 17, Ramirez 53)

River Plate 1 (Buonanotte 46)
Racing Club 1 (Moreno 35)

Sunday, October 24
Huracan 3 (Quintana 17, Quiroga 51, Rodriguez pen 72)
San Lorenzo 0

Independiente 0
Boca Juniors 0

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Sperdutti 12)
Gimnasia La Plata 0

Tigre 3 (Stracqualursi 4, Galmarini 18, Castano 88)
Olimpo 2 (Furch 33, Bareiro 61)

Friday, November 5
Estudiantes 3 (Fernandez 53, Hoyos 64, Perez 86)
Lanus 0

Olimpo 4 (Galvan 8, Brum 26, Bareiro 33, Vega 56)
Huracan 0

Saturday, November 6
Boca Juniors 0
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Gentiletti 87, Rius 89)

Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Aguero 70)
Quilmes 0

Godoy Cruz 0
Newell's Old Boys 0

Racing Club 2 (Luguercio 74, Aveldano 86)
Arsenal 2 (Obolo 19, Alvarez 79)

Sunday, November 7
All Boys 1 (Rodriguez 53)
River Plate 0

Banfield 2 (Mendez 20, Bustamante 59)
Velez Sarsfield 3 (Silva 6, Martinez 23, Cristaldo 73)

Colon 1 (Bellone 7)
Tigre 0

San Lorenzo 1 (Tula 46)
Independiente 1 (Pacheco 54)

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CHILE

Leaders' last show

Nine-man Colo Colo grabbed an injury-time equaliser through Javier Campora to earn a 2-2 draw against Universidad de Chile in the Santiago derby.

The league leaders had led through Esteban Paredes before Juan Gonzalez and Matias Rodriguez put *La U* in front.

Cup triumph...Deportivo coach Jaime De la Pava

COLOMBIA

Deportivo victory

Deportivo Cali beat second-tier side Itagui Ditaires 3-0 on aggregate in the Final to win the Colombian Cup for the first time in their history.

Already one goal up from the first leg, the Primera team secured victory with goals from Cesar Amaya and Andres Escobar in the return leg at home in Cali.

Double...Barcos

ECUADOR

LDU triumph at home

Reigning Sudamericana Cup holders LDU Quito overcame a 4-2 first-leg defeat to beat Chile's Union San Felipe and reach the quarter-finals of this season's competition.

Gonzalo Chila, Hernan Barcos (twice), Jorge Guagua, Carlos Luna and Juan Manuel Salgueiro were on target as LDU won their home leg 6-1 to

ARGENTINA – APERTURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Estudiantes	13	9	3	1	18	4	30
Velez	13	8	3	2	22	8	27
Arsenal	13	7	3	3	16	12	24
Newell's	13	5	7	1	12	6	22
Godoy Cruz	13	5	6	2	23	14	21
San Lorenzo	13	5	4	4	15	15	19
Colon	13	5	4	4	15	20	19
Banfield	13	4	6	3	16	11	18
Racing Club	13	5	3	5	17	13	18
All Boys	13	5	3	5	16	15	18
River Plate	13	4	6	3	13	12	18
Lanus	13	5	3	5	13	18	18
Boca Juniors	13	5	2	6	16	16	17
Argentinos	13	4	4	5	14	14	16
Tigre	13	4	3	6	16	17	15
Huracan	13	3	4	6	12	22	13
Olimpo	13	4	0	9	14	21	12
Independiente	13	2	5	6	10	20	11
Gimnasia LP	13	2	3	8	8	16	9
Quilmes	13	0	6	7	7	19	6

19-round tournament (19x1); no relegation after apertura

LEADING GOALSCORERS

8 Juan Manuel Martinez (Velez Sarsfield)
8 Santiago Silva (Velez Sarsfield)
6 Mauro Obolo (Arsenal)
6 Martin Palermo (Boca Juniors)
6 David Ramirez (Godoy Cruz)
6 Denis Stracqualursi (Tigre)

BOLIVIA

Clausura

Oct 23: Aurora 2 La Paz 1.
Oct 24: Bolivar 2 Oriente 1; Mamore 2 Potosi 1; San Jose 5 Guabira 1; Universitario 1 The Strongest 0; Blooming 3 Wilstermann 0.
Oct 27: La Paz 1 Universitario 1; Wilstermann 2 Mamore 0; Blooming 2 San Jose 2.
Oct 28: Guabira 1 Aurora 0.
Oct 31: Bolivar 4 La Paz 4; San Jose 0 Oriente 3; Universitario 1 Potosi 1; Wilstermann 3 The Strongest 1; Mamore 2 Aurora 1; Blooming 2 Guabira 3.
Nov 3: La Paz 1 Wilstermann 0; Guabira 1 Universitario 0; Potosi 1 San Jose 3; The Strongest 2 Blooming 1; Oriente 2 Mamore 0; Aurora 3 Bolivar 2.
Nov 6: Guabira 2 Wilstermann 1.
Nov 7: La Paz 0 The Strongest 1; Potosi 3 Blooming 0; Aurora 4 San Jose 1; Bolivar 2 Mamore 2; Oriente 3 Universitario 1.

BOLIVIA – CLAUSURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oriente	19	10	3	6	32	23	33
Aurora	19	9	4	6	32	26	31
San Jose	19	9	4	6	38	33	31
Bolivar	19	8	6	5	32	25	30
Guabira	19	8	5	6	19	24	29
Potosi	18	8	4	6	34	27	28
Blooming	20	8	4	8	25	24	28
The Strongest	19	8	1	10	32	33	25
Mamore	19	6	5	8	15	27	23
La Paz	19	6	4	9	28	32	22
Wilstermann	19	4	6	9	23	28	18
Universitario	19	4	6	9	20	28	18

22-round tournament (11x2); team with worst average points over two most recent seasons will be relegated; 2nd worst will enter rel/prom play-off

BRAZIL

Oct 23: Guarani 0 Goianiense 1; Botafogo 1 Vitoria 0.
Oct 24: Corinthians 1 Palmeiras 0; Goias 1 Avai 0; Ceara 2 Sao Paulo 0; Paranaense 2 Fluminense 2; Santos 2 Gremio Prudente 3; Vasco da Gama 1 Flamengo 1; Cruzeiro 3 Mineiro 4; Gremio 2 Internacional 2.
Oct 27: Flamengo 1 Corinthians 1.
Oct 28: Sao Paulo 2 Paranaense 1; Fluminense 2 Gremio 0; Goianiense 1 Ceara 1.
Oct 30: Internacional 1 Santos 1; Vitoria 4 Vasco da Gama 2; Gremio Prudente 0 Cruzeiro 2; Mineiro 0 Botafogo 2; Avai 1 Guarani 0; Palmeiras 3 Goias 2.
Nov 3: Santos 1 Vitoria 1; Botafogo 3 Goianiense 2; Guarani 0 Mineiro 0; Internacional 0 Fluminense 0; Goias 0 Gremio 2; Corinthians 4 Avai 0; Cruzeiro 0 Sao Paulo 2; Ceara 2 Flamengo 2.
Nov 4: Vasco da Gama 2 Gremio Prudente 1; Paranaense 1 Palmeiras 0.
Nov 6: Mineiro 2 Santos 2; Gremio 5 Ceara 1; Goianiense 2 Internacional 2.
Nov 7: Sao Paulo 0 Corinthians 2; Gremio Prudente 4 Goias 1; Vitoria 0 Cruzeiro 1; Avai 0 Botafogo 0; Palmeiras 1 Guarani 0; Flamengo 0 Paranaense 1; Fluminense 1 Vasco da Gama 0.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fluminense	34	17	10	7	54	33	61
Corinthians	34	17	9	8	60	39	60
Cruzeiro	34	17	9	8	46	34	60
Botafogo	34	13	16	5	48	34	55
Paranaense	34	15	8	11	38	40	53
Gremio	34	14	11	9	59	42	53
Santos	34	14	9	11	57	46	51
Internacional	34	14	9	11	40	36	51
Sao Paulo	34	14	8	12	47	48	50
Palmeiras	34	12	14	8	40	34	50
Vasco	34	10	15	9	39	39	45
Ceara	34	10	14	10	31	38	44
Flamengo	34	8	16	10	37	37	40
Vitoria	34	9	11	14	39	45	38
Goianiense	34	10	7	17	47	53	37
Mineiro	34	10	6	18	43	58	36
Guarani	34	8	12	14	31	46	36
Avai	34	8	10	16	40	53	34
Goias	34	8	7	19	37	59	31
G Prudente*	34	7	9	18	36	55	27

38-round season (19x2); bottom 4 will be relegated
**3pts deducted for fielding an ineligible player*

CHILE

Oct 21: Audax Italiano 4 Cobresal 2; Palestino 1 Colo Colo 2.
Oct 23: Everton 0 Wanderers 2; Huachipato 3 Univ Concepcion 0.
Oct 24: Nublense 1 Univ Catolica 4; San Felipe 3 San Luis 0; La Serena 3 Espanola 1; Morning 2 O'Higgins 1.
Oct 25: Univ Chile 3 Cobreloa 1.
Oct 29: San Luis 3 Espanola 1.
Oct 30: O'Higgins 2 Nublense 2; Univ Catolica 2 La Serena 1.
Oct 31: Univ Concepcion 2 Univ Chile 0; Cobresal 1 Everton 2; Cobreloa 2 Morning 1; Palestino 1 San Felipe 0; Wanderers 1 Audax Italiano 0; Colo Colo 0 Huachipato 0.
Nov 5: Audax Italiano 4 Univ Concepcion 1.
Nov 6: San Felipe 1 Univ Catolica 3; La Serena 1 Cobreloa 0; Espanola 3 Wanderers 0; Everton 1 Palestino 1.
Nov 7: Morning 2 San Luis 0; Univ Chile 2 Colo Colo 2; Nublense 3 Cobresal 1; Huachipato 2 O'Higgins 1.

CHILE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	30	20	5	5	61	29	65
Univ Catolica	30	19	5	6	63	35	62
Univ Chile	30	18	4	8	67	41	58
Audax Italiano	30	17	5	8	66	53	56
Espanola	30	12	9	9	50	44	45
San Felipe	30	12	6	12	36	38	42
Huachipato	30	10	11	9	39	38	41
Cobresal	30	12	5	13	47	47	41
La Serena	30	11	5	14	39	56	38
Palestino	30	10	7	13	30	34	37
Wanderers	30	10	7	13	39	45	37
O'Higgins	30	9	9	12	41	38	36
Cobreloa	30	9	9	12	39	39	36
U Concepcion	30	8	10	12	33	42	34
Morning	30	8	8	14	32	40	32
Nublense	30	7	11	12	46	61	32
Everton	30	7	9	14	34	51	30
San Luis	30	4	9	17	29	60	21

34-round season (17x2); bottom 2 will be relegated; 3rd & 4th bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

COLOMBIA

Clausura

Regular season

Oct 20: Nacional 2 Millonarios 1.
Oct 22: Tolima 3 La Equidad 0.
Oct 23: Nacional 1 Envigado 1; Junior 0 America 2; Dep Cali 3 Cartagena 1.
Oct 24: Chico 3 Indep Medellin 3; Once Caldas 2 Huila 1; Quindio 2 Cortulua 0; Millonarios 2 Pereira 1; Cucuta 1 Indep Santa Fe 1.
Oct 29: Indep Medellin 1 Tolima 0.
Oct 30: Pereira 0 Nacional 0; La Equidad 2 Millonarios 0; Huila 4 Chico 0.
Oct 31: Envigado 2 Dep Cali 2; Cartagena 1 Quindio 1; Cortulua 2 Junior 0; America 0 Cucuta 0; Indep Santa Fe 1 Once Caldas 1.
Nov 6: Chico 2 Indep Santa Fe 0; Millonarios 2 Tolima 2; Once Caldas 3 America 1.
Nov 7: Huila 1 Indep Medellin 1; Cucuta 3 Cortulua 0; Junior 1 Cartagena 1; Quindio 3 Envigado 2; Dep Cali 1 Pereira 1; Nacional 3 La Equidad 1.

COLOMBIA – CLAUSURA REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tolima	17	10	3	4	32	15	33
Once Caldas	17	10	3	4	31	26	33
Nacional	17	10	3	4	25	20	33
Ind Santa Fe	17	9	5	3	23	13	32
Huila	17	8	6	3	28	21	30
Quindio	17	9	3	5	25	20	30
La Equidad	17	8	4	5	23	20	28
Cucuta	17	7	4	6	22	18	25
Dep Cali	17	5	8	4	28	23	23
Millonarios	17	6	4	7	23	22	22
America	17	6	4	7	21	23	22
Ind Medellin	17	4	9	4	19	20	21
Chico	17	5	6	6	16	22	21
Junior	17	2	9	6	19	26	15
Cartagena	17	3	6	8	17	27	15
Cortulua	17	3	4	10	14	27	13
Pereira	17	0	8	9	12	22	8
Envigado	17	1	5	11	17	30	8

18-round regular season – top 8 will enter championship play-offs; team with worst average points over three most recent seasons will be relegated; 2nd worst will enter rel/prom play-off

ECUADOR

2nd stage

Oct 20: El Nacional 4 Manta 0; Macara 0 Olmedo 1; Cuenca 2 Univ Catolica 1; Barcelona 0 Espoli 3.
Oct 23: LDU 3 Macara 0.
Oct 24: Dep Quito 4 Manta 0; Olmedo 2 Independiente 1; Univ Catolica 2 Barcelona 2; Espoli 0 El Nacional 1.
Oct 26: Emelec 0 Cuenca 1.
Oct 29: Independiente 0 LDU 4; El Nacional 0 Univ Catolica 1; Manta 0 Espoli 0.
Oct 30: Macara 1 Dep Quito 0; Cuenca 2 Olmedo 3; Barcelona 0 Emelec 0.
Nov 5: Emelec 2 El Nacional 0.
Nov 6: Dep Quito 2 Espoli 0; LDU 2 Cuenca 0.
Nov 7: Olmedo 0 Barcelona 1; Univ Catolica 3 Manta 0; Macara 0 Independiente 2.

ECUADOR – 2ND STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU	18	13	3	2	37	13	42
Cuenca	19	11	5	3	30	20	38
Emelec	17	8	7	2	18	7	31
Dep Quito	17	9	3	5	26	16	30
Barcelona	19	7	4	8	20	22	25
El Nacional	19	6	5	8	17	18	23
Manta	19	6	5	8	19	29	23
Olmedo	19	6	4	9	17	25	22
Univ Catolica	19	5	5	9	24	27	20
Espoli	19	3	8	8	16	24	17
Macara	19	4	5	10	17	29	17
Independiente	18	4	4	10	19	30	16

22-round stage (11x2) – 2nd stage winner then meets 1st stage winner to decide overall champion; the 2 teams with fewest points from both stages combined will be relegated

PARAGUAY

Clausura

Oct 20: Rubio Nu 1 Libertad 3; Colombia 1 3 de Febrero 1; Trinidense 3 Nacional 3; Olimpia 0 Sol de America 0; Tacuary 1 Guarani 1; Luqueno 1 Cerro Porteno 3.
Oct 24: 3 de Febrero 3 Rubio Nu 0; Libertad 2 Olimpia 2; Nacional 2 Luqueno 0; Sol de America 2 Trinidense 2; Cerro Porteno 1 Tacuary 3; Guarani 3 Colombia 0.
Oct 30: Nacional 0 Guarani 1; Luqueno 0 Rubio Nu 1; Tacuary 2 Colombia 1; Trinidense 1 Libertad 2.
Oct 31: Cerro Porteno 1 Olimpia 1; Sol de America 0 3 de Febrero 1.
Nov 5: Guarani 2 Libertad 0.
Nov 6: Sol de America 0 Tacuary 1; Nacional 4 Colombia 3; Trinidense 2 Luqueno 2; 3 de Febrero 0 Olimpia 3; Cerro Porteno 2 Rubio Nu 0.

PARAGUAY – CLAUSURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	18	13	1	4	36	14	40
Cerro Porteno	18	11	6	1	31	14	39
Guarani	18	10	4	4	26	14	34
Nacional	18	9	5	4	23	15	32
Olimpia	18	6	8	4	27	20	26
Rubio Nu	18	6	5	7	21	25	23
Tacuary	18	6	5	7	17	21	23
Colombia	18	4	6	8	18	27	18
Sol America	18	4	4	10	15	22	16
3 de Febrero	18	3	7	8	14	24	16
Trinidense	18	2	7	9	21	42	13
Luqueno	18	1	8	9	16	27	11

22-round tournament (11x2); team with worst average points over three most recent seasons will be relegated; 2nd worst will enter rel/prom play-off

On a roll...Mora

go through 8-5 on aggregate.

LDU also all but secured the second phase of the league, beating second-place Cuenca 2-0 with goals from Jorge Guagua and Carlos Luna.

PARAGUAY

Only one point in it

Goals from Roberto Nanni and Juan Maldonado enabled Cerro Porteno to close the gap at the top of the clausura table with a 2-0 victory over Rubio Nu as leaders Libertad lost 2-0 at Guarani.

URUGUAY

Mora makes it six

Rodrigo Mora scored in his sixth consecutive game as Defensor marched on at the top of the table with a 3-0 victory over Racing.

Eduardo Aranda and Ignacio Risso also scored as Defensor moved two points clear due to Penarol dropping points with a 1-1 draw at home to Rampla Juniors.

MEXICO

Continental dominance shows once again

A Mexican side is guaranteed to be in the CONCACAF Champions League Final for the third year running.

Cruz Azul, runners-up in the competition for the past two seasons, will face Santos Laguna in this season's quarter-finals, while Monterrey will meet Toluca. The winners of these two ties will then meet in an all-Mexican semi-final.

MLS rivals Real Salt Lake and Columbus are also paired together, while Olimpia of Honduras play Saprissa of Costa Rica in the other last-eight games.

PERU

2nd stage

Group A

Oct 22: Alianza Lima 3 Inti Gas 0; Total Chalaco 1 San Martin 5.
Oct 23: Sporting Cristal 0 Universitario 0.
Oct 24: CNI 1 Jose Galvez 2.
Oct 27: Inti Gas 2 Total Chalaco 1; San Martin 4 Alianza Lima 0; Universitario 2 CNI 1.
Oct 28: Jose Galvez 1 Sporting Cristal 0.
Oct 31: Inti Gas 5 CNI 0; Total Chalaco 0 Universitario 0.
Nov 1: Alianza Lima 3 Jose Galvez 1; San Martin 1 Sporting Cristal 0.
Nov 5: Universitario 1 Inti Gas 1.
Nov 6: Sporting Cristal 0 Total Chalaco 1; Jose Galvez 0 San Martin 0.
Nov 7: CNI 2 Alianza Lima 0.

PERU – 2ND STAGE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Martin*	39	26	6	7	78	33	85
Alianza Lima	39	20	9	10	62	42	69
Universitario**	39	19	9	11	50	27	64
S Cristal	39	15	9	15	50	51	54
Inti Gas	39	16	3	20	51	58	51
CNI	39	13	8	18	48	64	47
Jose Galvez	39	10	12	17	29	52	42
T Chalaco***	39	9	10	20	36	57	35

**San Martin gained a 1pt bonus because their youth/reserve team were runners-up in the 1st stage of their league*
***2pts deducted for failing to pay a former coach*
****2pts deducted for failing to pay a former player*

Group B

Oct 23: Cienciano 3 Juan Aurich 0; Cesar Vallejo 1 Leon 2.
Oct 24: Sport Boys 2 Melgar 1; Huancayo 5 Alianza Atletico 0.
Oct 27: Leon 4 Sport Boys 0; Melgar 2 Cesar Vallejo 0; Juan Aurich 3 Huancayo 1.
Oct 28: Alianza Atletico 2 Cienciano 0.
Oct 30: Sport Boys 2 Juan Aurich 1; Melgar 2 Cienciano 1.
Oct 31: Leon 2 Huancayo 0; Cesar Vallejo 2 Alianza Atletico 2.
Nov 6: Alianza Atletico 1 Melgar 1; Juan Aurich 1 Leon 0; Cienciano 2 Sport Boys 1.
Nov 7: Huancayo 1 Cesar Vallejo 0.

PERU – 2ND STAGE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leon	39	22	7	10	70	38	73
Juan Aurich	39	18	10	11	58	42	64
Cesar Vallejo*	39	18	7	14	59	45	63
Huancayo	39	15	6	18	58	56	51
Melgar	39	12	11	16	49	64	47
Sport Boys	39	13	6	20	45	70	45
Al Atletico	39	9	12	18	40	64	39
Cienciano**	39	11	7	21	43	64	38

**Cesar Vallejo gained a 2pt bonus because their youth/reserve team won the 1st stage of their league*
***2pts deducted for failing to pay a former player*

14-round stage (7x2), with teams having carried forward full points and goals record from the 30-round 1st stage – group winners then meet to decide 2nd stage winners

URUGUAY

Apertura

Oct 23: Wanderers 2 Fenix 2; Miramar Misiones 1 Cerro 1; Nacional 3 Tacuarembo 0.
Oct 24: River Plate 1 Liverpool 2; Defensor 4 Rampla 1; Central Espanol 1 Racing 1; Bella Vista 1 El Tanque Sisley 2; Penarol 1 Danubio 0.
Oct 27: Tacuarembo 1 Penarol 5.
Oct 30: Central Espanol 2 Wanderers 1; Rampla 2 Miramar Misiones 0; Nacional 6 River Plate 1.
Oct 31: Defensor 5 Fenix 1; Danubio 2 El Tanque Sisley 0; Tacuarembo 0 Cerro 1; Racing 1 Bella Vista 2; Penarol 1 Liverpool 2.
Nov 6: Penarol 1 Rampla 1; Fenix 4 Cerro 0; Racing 0 Defensor 3.
Nov 7: El Tanque Sisley 1 Liverpool 1; Miramar Misiones 1 River Plate 1; Tacuarembo 0 Danubio 3; Wanderers 0 Bella Vista 2; Central Espanol 1 Nacional 3.

URUGUAY – APERTURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Defensor	11	7	2	2	25	9	23
Penarol	11	6	3	2	20	12	21
Nacional	11	5	4	2	22	15	19
Danubio	11	5	4	2	14	7	19
Tanque Sisley	11	5	4	2	17	15	19
Bella Vista	11	6	1	4	16	14	19
Liverpool	11	4	5	2	15	14	17
Wanderers	11	4	4	3	15	12	16
River Plate	11	4	3	4	12	17	15
Fenix	11	3	5	3	18	16	14
C Espanol	11	3	4	4	15	17	13
Cerro	11	2	6	3	8	11	12
M Misiones	11	2	3	6	11	18	9
Racing	11	1	4	6	9	16	7
Rampla	11	1	4	6	13	21	7
Tacuarembo	11	1	2	8	9	25	5

15-round tournament (15x1); no relegation after apertura

VENEZUELA

Apertura

Oct 23: Carabobo 2 Lara 2.
Oct 24: Venezuela 1 Zulia 1; Tachira 1 Mineros 1; Estudiantes 1 Petare 2; Yaracuyanos 1 Anzoategui 1; Trujillanos 2 Zamora 0; Caroni 0 Esppor 1; Monagas 2 Aragua 2; Caracas 2 El Vigia 1.
Oct 27: Mineros 1 Esppor 3.
Oct 31: Lara 0 Trujillanos 1; El Vigia 3 Carabobo 1; Aragua 1 Venezuela 2; Petare 0 Caroni 0; Esppor 2 Monagas 1; Mineros 1 Yaracuyanos 1; Anzoategui 2 Estudiantes 1; Zamora 1 Tachira 1.
Nov 6: Carabobo 2 Zulia 3.
Nov 7: Yaracuyanos 2 Zamora 1; Tachira 3 Lara 1; Estudiantes 0 Mineros 1; Caroni 1 Anzoategui 7; Trujillanos 3 El Vigia 2; Monagas 2 Petare 4; Venezuela 0 Esppor 1; Caracas 1 Aragua 2.

VENEZUELA – APERTURA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esppor	12	10	1	1	26	6	31
Tachira	12	7	4	1	24	11	25
Caracas	11	7	1	3	15	9	22
Petare	12	6	4	2	19	14	22
Trujillanos	12	6	3	3	16	10	21
Aragua	12	6	3	3	18	15	21
Zulia	11	5	2	4	18	17	17
Yaracuyanos	12	3	7	2	12	11	16
Anzoategui	12	4	4	4	24	24	16
Monagas	12	4	3	5	21	17	15
Estudiantes	12	4	3	5	14	17	15
Mineros	12	3	5	4	15	16	14
Venezuela	12	3	3	6	14	23	12
Carabobo	12	2	5	5	13	18	11
Lara	12	1	6	5	14	21	9
El Vigia	12	1	5	6	15	22	8
Zamora	12	1	5	6	12	20	8
Caroni	12	1	2	9	5	24	5

17-round tournament (17x1); no relegation after apertura

CONCACAF

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 19: Toronto (Can) 1 Arabe Unido (Pan) 0; Real Salt Lake (USA) 3 Cruz Azul (Mex) 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salt Lake	6	4	1	1	17	11	13
Cruz Azul	6	3	1	2	15	9	10
Toronto	6	2	2	2	5	7	8
Arabe Unido	6	1	0	5	4	14	3

Group B

Oct 19: Santos Laguna (Mex) 6 Municipal (Gtm) 1.
Oct 21: Joe Public (T&T) 1 Columbus Crew (USA) 4.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	6	4	1	1	19	7	13
Columbus	6	4	0	2	10	4	12
Municipal	6	2	2	2	9	13	8
Joe Public	6	0	1	5	7	21	1

Group C

Oct 19: Seattle Sounders (USA) 1 Saprissa (CR) 2.
Oct 20: Marathon (Hnd) 0 Monterrey (Mex) 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	6	5	1	0	11	4	16
Saprissa	6	3	1	2	11	7	10
Marathon	6	2	0	4	5	11	6
Seattle	6	1	0	5	6	11	3

Group D

Oct 20: Toluca (Mex) 5 CD FAS (ESv) 0; Olimpia (Hnd) 3 Puerto Rico Islanders (PR) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia	6	4	1	1	12	7	13
Toluca	6	3	1	2	15	5	10
Puerto Rico	6	2	2	2	8	10	8
CD FAS	6	0	2	4	2	15	2

Top two in each group qualified for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals draw

Columbus Crew v Real Salt Lake
Cruz Azul v Santos Laguna
Saprissa v Olimpia
Toluca v Monterrey
1st legs - February 22-24; 2nd legs - March 1-3

MEXICO

Apertura

Regular season

Oct 22: Necaxa 0 San Luis 2.
Oct 23: Jaguares 2 Pachuca 0; Queretaro 1 Tecos 0; Santos 1 Monterrey 2; Tigres 2 Pumas 0; Atlas 3 Atlante 1.
Oct 24: Morelia 1 Cruz Azul 1; Toluca 2 Puebla 1; America 0 Guadalajara 0.
Oct 26: Pachuca 2 Tigres 3; Pumas 1 Atlas 1.
Oct 27: Tecos 0 Necaxa 2; Jaguares 0 Morelia 0; Puebla 0 Santos 1; Guadalajara 0 Toluca 0; Monterrey 2 Cruz Azul 4; Atlante 1 Queretaro 0.
Oct 28: San Luis 1 America 2.
Oct 30: Cruz Azul 1 Puebla 0; Queretaro 2 Pumas 1; Tigres 0 Jaguares 0; Santos 1 Guadalajara 1; Atlas 1 Pachuca 2.
Oct 31: Morelia 0 Monterrey 2; Toluca 1 San Luis 2; America 4 Tecos 1; Necaxa 1 Atlante 2.
Nov 5: Tecos 4 Toluca 2.
Nov 6: Jaguares 2 Atlas 1; San Luis 1 Santos 1; Tigres 0 Morelia 1; Guadalajara 0 Cruz Azul 0; Pachuca 2 Queretaro 1; Atlante 0 America 1.
Nov 7: Puebla 2 Monterrey 0; Pumas 2 Necaxa 0.

MEXICO – APERTURA REGULAR – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	16	9	5	2	27	17	32
Santos	16	8	3	5	27	19	27
Tigres	16	6	5	5	22	14	23
Guadalajara	16	3	10	3	13	13	19
Necaxa	16	4	4	8	13	19	16
Tecos	16	4	3	9	18	35	15

MEXICO – APERTURA REGULAR – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	16	7	6	3	22	15	27
San Luis	16	8	2	6	21	18	26
Pachuca	16	6	4	6	25	27	22
Toluca	16	5	6	5	17	19	21
Atlante	16	4	3	9	16	26	15
Atlas	16	3	3	10	16	25	12

MEXICO – APERTURA REGULAR – GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	16	11	3	2	32	13	36
Jaguares	16	6	6	4	20	13	24
Pumas	16	6	4	6	22	24	22
Morelia	16	5	5	6	14	13	20
Puebla	16	5	3	8	18	23	18
Queretaro	16	5	3	8	17	27	18

17-round regular season (17x1) – top 2 in each group and the 2 other teams with most points, regardless of group, will enter championship play-offs. No relegation after apertura

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WORLD SERVICE

CAMEROON

Season's silver lining

Relegated Fovu Baham won the Cameroonian Cup, beating Astres 2-1 in the Final with goals from Romeo Mbele and Tresor Owona Zoa.

DR CONGO

Vita victorious

Vita Club from Kinshasa finished above reigning African champions TP Mazembe on goal difference to win the national league crown.

KENYA

Tragedy in Nairobi

Eight people were trampled to death following a stampede at the Nyayo Stadium during the match between arch-rivals Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards.

The game continued despite the fatalities that occurred in the middle of the first half, Gor winning 1-0 with a late penalty.

Football Kenya official Frank Okoth said the stampede was caused by thousands of fans without tickets attempting to force their way into the stadium.

The authorities immediately closed the stadium in Nairobi, along with the capital's other main venue, the City Stadium.

TANZANIA

League expands

The Tanzanian Premier League has announced that it will increase to 14 teams next season, with four teams promoted from the first division at the end of this campaign, and only two relegated. The Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) will also reinstate the FA Cup tournament from next year.

Disaster...Nyayo Stadium

UNITED STATES

Regular season

Oct 20: San Jose 3 Chivas 0.
Oct 21: New York 2 New England 0.
Oct 23: Houston 2 Seattle 1; DC United 2 Toronto 3; Kansas City 4 San Jose 1; Colorado 2 Salt Lake 2; Chivas 1 Chicago 4.
Oct 24: Columbus 3 Philadelphia 1; Los Angeles 2 Dallas 1.

USA – REGULAR: EASTERN CONF'CE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New York	30	15	6	9	38	29	51
Columbus	30	14	8	8	40	34	50
Kansas City	30	11	6	13	36	35	39
Chicago	30	9	9	12	37	38	36
Toronto	30	9	8	13	33	41	35
New England	30	9	5	16	32	50	32
Philadelphia	30	8	7	15	35	49	31
DC United	30	6	4	20	21	47	22

USA – REGULAR: WESTERN CONF'CE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Los Angeles	30	18	5	7	44	26	59
Salt Lake	30	15	11	4	45	20	56
Dallas	30	12	14	4	42	28	50
Seattle	30	14	6	10	39	35	48
Colorado	30	12	10	8	44	32	46
San Jose	30	13	7	10	34	33	46
Houston	30	9	6	15	40	49	33
Chivas	30	8	4	18	31	45	28

Top two in each conference and the four other teams with most points, regardless of conference, entered championship play-offs

Quarter-finals

1st legs - October 28-31; 2nd legs - November 4-7
Colorado v Columbus 1-0, 1-2 (aet)
(agg 2-2; Colorado 5-4 on pens)
Dallas v Salt Lake 2-1, 1-1 (agg 3-2)
San Jose v New York 0-1, 3-1 (agg 3-2)
Seattle v Los Angeles 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

1st leg

Oct 31
TP Mazembe (DRC) 5 (Kasongo 19, 75, Kaluyituka pen 45, Singuluma 55, 59)
Esperance (Tun) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Djaoupe (Tog)
TP Mazembe: Kidiaba - Kasusula, Nkulukuta, Sunzu, Kimwaki, Mihayo, Kasongo (Kanda 77), Bedi, Kaluyituka, Kabangu (Semakweri 86), Singuluma.
Esperance: Naouara - Afful, Hichri, Chemmam, Ben Mansour, Traoui, Khelifa, Korbi, Eneramo (Ayari 66), Darragi (Derbali 35), Msakni (Toindouba 88).
Sent off: Ben Mansour 24min.

ANGOLA

ANGOLA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Interclube	30	17	4	9	45	20	55
Recreativo	30	16	7	7	40	25	55
1° Agosto	30	14	9	7	43	26	51
Petro	30	14	8	8	36	21	50
Bravos	30	13	9	8	41	30	48
Libolo	30	13	9	8	38	29	48
ASA	30	13	7	10	29	30	46
Kabuscorp	30	11	10	9	39	33	43
Academica	30	11	9	10	39	35	42
Benfica Lu'da	30	11	6	13	34	39	39
S Esperanca	30	8	11	11	28	35	35
Cabinda	30	8	9	13	27	42	33
Santos	30	8	9	13	27	42	33
Desp Huila	30	8	8	14	31	42	32
Sporting	30	7	4	19	19	36	25
Benfica Lu'go	30	5	7	18	28	59	22

EGYPT

EGYPT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zamalek	9	5	3	1	18	12	18
Ahly	7	5	2	0	9	4	17
Masry	10	4	4	2	13	7	16
Shorta	9	4	4	1	11	7	16
Petrojet	10	4	3	3	10	10	15
ML Makasa	9	4	2	3	17	12	14
ENPPI	10	4	2	4	11	9	14
Entag Harby	10	4	2	4	14	14	14
Ismaili	8	4	1	3	11	9	13
Haras Hedood	7	3	3	1	9	8	12
Wadi Degla	10	3	1	6	13	19	10
Ittihad	9	2	3	4	12	14	9
Gouna	9	2	3	4	5	9	9
Jaish	10	2	3	5	9	15	9
Mokawloon	10	2	2	6	9	16	8
Smouha	9	0	4	5	5	11	4

Standings on November 9
30-round season (15x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

IVORY COAST

IVORY COAST – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASEC	26	13	9	4	41	14	48
Jeunesse Club	26	11	8	7	30	20	41
Sewe Sport	26	11	7	8	27	20	40
SO Armee	26	10	9	7	29	24	39
Stella	26	10	8	8	26	25	38
AFAD	26	8	12	6	21	18	36
Issia Wazi	26	9	9	8	27	31	36
Africa Sports	26	9	8	9	16	17	35
Bassam	26	10	4	12	24	30	34
Denguele	26	9	6	11	28	24	33
Ouragahio	26	8	9	9	30	32	33
Stade Abidjan	26	9	5	12	20	32	32
Sabe (R)	26	8	5	13	29	38	29
Hire (R)	26	4	7	15	26	49	19

Promoted: Adzope, Indenie

MOZAMBIQUE

MOZAMBIQUE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
L Muculmana	26	18	4	4	44	13	58
Maxaquene	26	15	6	5	27	14	51
Ferroviario M	26	14	6	6	41	19	48
HCB	26	12	10	4	29	21	46
Matchedje	26	9	7	10	19	24	34
Vilankulo	26	8	10	8	19	24	34
Costa do Sol	26	8	7	11	30	26	31
Desp Maputo	26	7	9	10	17	23	30
Sporting	26	8	6	12	28	36	30
Ferroviario B	26	7	8	11	21	26	29
A Muculmano	26	6	10	10	18	28	28
Textafrica (R)	26	6	8	12	16	26	26
F'viario P (R)	26	6	6	14	18	29	24
Lichinga (R)	26	5	9	12	13	31	24

SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mamelodi S	6	5	0	1	9	3	15
Kaizer Chiefs	6	4	2	0	7	1	14
Orlando P'tes	6	3	2	1	8	4	11
Ajax CT	6	3	2	1	9	7	11
Wits Univ	6	3	1	2	11	6	10
Golden Arrows	6	3	1	2	9	7	10
Bloemfontein	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
Santos	6	2	3	1	5	4	9
SuperSport	6	2	1	3	5	9	7
AmaZulu	6	1	3	2	9	11	6
Platinum Stars	6	1	3	2	5	8	6
Free State S	6	1	3	2	3	6	6
Vasco	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Maritzburg	6	1	2	3	4	9	5
Mpumalanga	6	1	1	4	7	10	4
Moroka S	6	0	1	5	5	11	1

Standings on November 9
30-round season (15x2); bottom team will be relegated; 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

TUNISIA

TUNISIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance	7	6	1	0	10	1	19
Etoile Sahel	8	5	1	2	12	6	16
Club Africain	8	3	3	2	9	6	12
Stade Tunisien	7	3	3	1	6	5	12
CS Sfaxien	7	3	3	1	5	4	12
Bizertin	8	3	2	3	5	5	11
Hammam-Lif	8	2	4	2	6	7	10
Ham-Sousse	7	2	2	3	6	6	8
Olympique	8	1	5	2	5	7	8
Marsa	8	1	5	2	3	6	8
Gafsa	8	2	2	4	6	10	8
Gabes	8	2	1	5	3	8	7
Zarzis	8	1	3	4	4	5	6
Kairouanaise	8	1	3	4	7	11	6

Standings on November 9
26-round season (13x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs

Oct 5
Al Shabab (Sau) 4 (Olivera 15, 83, Al Shimrani 57, Al Sultan 89)
Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (SKo) 3 (Molina 3, 66, Jo Jae-cheol 27)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 9,300. **Ref:** Breeze (Aus)

Oct 6
Zob-Ahan (Irn) 1 (Hadadifar 57)
Al Hilal (Sau) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,811. **Ref:** Mohd Saleh (Mly)

2nd legs

Oct 20
Al Hilal 0
Zob-Ahan 1 (Castro 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 68,752. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Sent off: Lee Young-pyo (Al Hilal) 70min
Zob-Ahan 2-0 on agg

Oct 20
Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma 1 (Cho Dong-keon 31)
Al Shabab 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,996. **Ref:** Al Badwawi (UAE)
Agg 4-4. Seongnam on away goals

AFC CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - October 5; 2nd legs - October 19
Al Riffa (Bhn) v Al Qadsia (Kuw)
2-0, 1-4 (agg 3-4)
Muangthong United (Tha) v Al Ittihad (Syr)
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)

Final

Nov 6 - Kuwait City
Al Qadsia 1 (H Al Enezi 29)
Al Ittihad 1 (Dyab 52)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 58,604.
Ref: Al Ghamdi (Sau)
Al Ittihad 4-2 on pens
Al Qadsia: Al Khaldi - Ali, Al Enzi, Al Fadhel, Sanad (Al Namash 111), Al Amer, Al Ebrahim, Al Hussien (Al Mejmed 120), A Al Enezi, Al Motawaa, H Al Enezi (Al Khatib 78). *Sent off: Al Amer 75min.*
Al Ittihad: Othman - Kalasi (Kalaji 84), Hemidi, Homsi, Dakka, Fares (Charour 91), Dyab, Al Hasan, Kongnyuy, Muhmad, Rashed (Salal 72).
Sent off: Al Hasan 90+2min.

AUSTRALIA

Regular season

Oct 20: Brisbane 2 Central Coast 0.
Oct 22: Adelaide 3 Wellington 0.
Oct 23: Melbourne Heart 0 Gold Coast 0; Brisbane 2 Melbourne Victory 1.
Oct 24: Perth 0 Sydney 3.
Oct 29: Melbourne Victory 2 Adelaide 1.
Oct 30: Sydney 1 Brisbane 1; Central Coast 5 Perth 0.
Oct 31: Newcastle 0 Melbourne Heart 2; North Queensland 1 Gold Coast 2.
Nov 3: Wellington 1 Brisbane 4; Perth 0 Melbourne Heart 0.
Nov 5: North Queensland 0 Central Coast 1.
Nov 6: Melbourne Victory 0 Gold Coast 1; Brisbane 4 Adelaide 0.
Nov 7: Sydney 1 Newcastle 0; Perth 0 Wellington 1.

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JAPAN

Jubilo cup joy

Jubilo Iwata won the J.League Cup, beating Sanfrecce Hiroshima 5-3 in extra time.

KYRGYSTAN

Neftchi take title

Neftchi Kochkorata ended Dordoy-Dinamo's six-year reign as league champions by securing the Vysshaja Liga with a 4-0 victory over Sher. It was a first-ever league crown for Neftchi, who finished one point ahead of AFC Presidents Cup runners-up Dordoy-Dinamo.

SINGAPORE

Etoile shine bright

Etoile twice came from behind to beat Albirex Niigata 4-2 on the final day of the season to win the S.League.

SYRIA

Ittihad youngsters win

Al Ittihad won the AFC Cup in their very first appearance in the competition, beating Kuwait's Al Qadsia 4-2 on penalties after the two teams had drawn 1-1 after extra-time in the Final in Kuwait City.

Al Ittihad coach Tita Valeriu praised his team after the Final saying: "We were without six first-team players. I had to replace them with young players. I never thought of winning the title earlier because Al Qadsia are a big team and were playing in front of a large number of fans."

Victory...Ittihad's skipper Majeddin Homsi

UZBEKISTAN

Third successive crown

Bunyodkor won their third successive league title, finishing eight points clear of Tashkent rivals Pakhtakor.

AUSTRALIA – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brisbane	14	8	5	1	23	9	29
Adelaide	13	7	4	2	21	15	25
Central Coast	11	6	3	2	15	8	21
Gold Coast	12	5	6	1	12	7	21
Melbourne V	14	4	5	5	16	15	17
Melbourne H	13	4	5	4	14	16	17
Wellington	13	4	3	6	16	22	15
Perth	14	3	3	8	12	24	12
Sydney	13	2	5	6	15	20	11
N Queensland	12	2	4	6	16	20	10
Newcastle	11	1	5	5	5	9	8

30-round regular season (10x3) – top 6 will enter championship play-offs. No relegation from this league

CHINA

CHINA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shandong	30	18	9	3	59	34	63
Tianjin	30	13	11	6	37	29	50
Shanghai	30	14	6	10	44	41	48
Hangzhou	30	13	9	8	38	30	48
Beijing	30	12	10	8	35	29	46
Dalian	30	10	12	8	40	37	42
Liaoning	30	10	10	10	39	36	40
Henan	30	9	13	8	31	31	40
Changchun	30	10	8	12	40	41	38
Shaanxi	30	9	10	11	33	36	37
Jiangsu	30	8	11	11	27	27	35
Shenzhen	30	8	8	14	34	41	32
Nanchang	30	8	8	14	33	35	32
Qingdao	30	6	12	12	31	44	30
Chongqing (R)	30	7	9	14	36	48	30
Changsha (R)	30	6	12	12	24	42	30

Promoted: Guangzhou GAC, Chengdu Blades

IRAN

IRAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zob-Ahan	14	8	4	2	19	11	28
Persepolis	14	8	3	3	22	14	27
Esteghlal	14	6	6	2	22	17	24
Sepahan	13	6	5	2	20	11	23
Mes	14	6	5	3	23	16	23
Sanat Naft	14	7	1	6	18	15	22
Teraktor Sazi	14	5	5	4	16	12	20
Rah-Ahan	14	6	2	6	18	19	20
Malavan	14	5	5	4	16	19	20
Foolad	14	4	6	4	22	15	18
Saba	13	4	5	4	17	15	17
Pas	14	4	4	6	12	17	16
Saipa	14	4	3	7	23	25	15
Shahin	14	3	5	6	13	15	14
Naft Tehran	14	2	8	4	12	16	14
Steel Azin	14	3	4	7	13	26	13
Shahrdari	14	2	6	6	20	29	12
Peykan	14	3	1	10	16	30	10

Standings on November 9

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

JAPAN

Oct 23: Jubilo 2 Urawa 1; Tokyo 1 Albirex 1; Montedio 0 Shimizu 3; Cerezo 0 Vegalta 0; Vissel 1 Nagoya 2.
Oct 24: Kyoto 1 Gamba 2; Sanfrecce 3 Shonan 0; Kashima 2 Yokohama 0; Omiya 2 Kawasaki 2.
Oct 30: Vegalta 1 Kyoto 0; Shimizu 1 Tokyo 2; Nagoya 1 Cerezo 0; Urawa 0 Montedio 1; Kawasaki 1 Jubilo 1; Gamba 2 Vissel 4.
Oct 31: Yokohama 2 Sanfrecce 1; Albirex 2 Kashima 1.
Nov 6: Shonan 1 Yokohama 4; Cerezo 1 Shimizu 0; Vissel 2 Vegalta 0; Tokyo 1 Gamba 1; Jubilo 1 Albirex 1; Omiya 2 Montedio 1; Kyoto 3 Kawasaki 4.
Nov 7: Sanfrecce 2 Urawa 1; Kashima 1 Nagoya 0.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nagoya	29	19	3	7	47	33	60
Kashima	29	14	10	5	45	26	52
Gamba	29	14	8	7	56	41	50
Kawasaki	29	14	7	8	55	40	49
Cerezo	29	13	9	7	41	26	48
Yokohama	29	14	6	9	39	29	48
Shimizu	29	12	9	8	50	43	45
Sanfrecce	29	12	9	8	38	32	45
Albirex	29	11	10	8	41	36	43
Urawa	29	12	5	12	41	33	41
Jubilo	29	10	10	9	33	37	40
Montedio	29	10	5	14	23	37	35
Vegalta	29	9	7	13	34	40	34
Omiya	28	8	7	13	27	38	31
Tokyo	29	6	11	12	31	35	29
Vissel	29	7	8	14	29	42	29
Kyoto	29	3	7	19	27	53	16
Shonan	28	3	7	18	28	64	16

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

SAUDI ARABIA

SAUDI ARABIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ittihad	11	7	4	0	20	7	25
Al Nasr	12	6	5	1	22	13	23
Al Ittifaq	12	7	1	4	18	13	22
Al Hilal	9	6	3	0	20	6	21
Al Faisaly	12	5	4	3	20	20	19
Al Shabab	9	4	3	2	14	15	15
Al Raed	12	3	5	4	12	17	14
Al Wahda	12	3	4	5	19	20	13
Al Qadisiya	11	2	6	3	17	16	12
Al Taawon	12	3	3	6	15	16	12
Najran	12	4	0	8	16	21	12
Al Ahli	12	3	2	7	20	24	11
Al Fateh	11	2	5	4	11	16	11
Al Hazm	11	0	3	8	7	27	3

Standings on November 9

26-round season (13x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

SOUTH KOREA

Regular season

Sep 25: Busan 0 Ulsan 2; Chunnam 1 Seoul 1; Gyeongnam 1 Daegu 0.
Sep 26: Gangwon 1 Seongnam 2; Jeju 1 Pohang 1; Incheon 3 Jeonbuk 2; Gwangju 1 Suwon 1.
Oct 2: Daejeon 1 Ulsan 5; Jeonbuk 0 Gwangju 0.
Oct 3: Daegu 2 Busan 1; Seoul 2 Incheon 0; Jeju 3 Gyeongnam 2; Chunnam 2 Gangwon 1.
Oct 9: Pohang 1 Gwangju 0; Ulsan 0 Jeonbuk 1; Busan 0 Seongnam 0; Incheon 3 Daejeon 3; Gangwon 1 Jeju 4; Seoul 3 Gyeongnam 2; Suwon 1 Chunnam 0.
Oct 15: Seongnam 0 Daejeon 0.
Oct 16: Pohang 2 Busan 2; Gwangju 0 Daegu 3; Jeonbuk 1 Jeju 1; Chunnam 0 Incheon 0.
Oct 17: Ulsan 1 Seoul 2; Gyeongnam 1 Gangwon 1.
Oct 27: Chunnam 0 Seongnam 3; Daejeon 0 Pohang 1; Busan 0 Suwon 1; Jeju 1 Seoul 1; Daegu 0 Jeonbuk 1; Incheon 2 Gyeongnam 2; Gangwon 1 Gwangju 0.
Oct 30: Ulsan 3 Incheon 0; Seongnam 2 Gwangju 2; Jeonbuk 3 Chunnam 1.
Oct 31: Seoul 3 Busan 1; Suwon 2 Pohang 0; Gyeongnam 1 Daejeon 0; Daegu 0 Jeju 3.
Nov 3: Pohang 3 Gyeongnam 0; Ulsan 5 Daegu 0; Daejeon 1 Suwon 1; Gwangju 0 Chunnam 1; Busan 1 Jeonbuk 0; Seongnam 1 Seoul 2; Incheon 1 Gangwon 3.
Nov 7: Chunnam 2 Daegu 1; Seoul 2 Daejeon 1; Gyeongnam 2 Seongnam 2; Suwon 1 Jeonbuk 5; Gwangju 1 Ulsan 2; Gangwon 2 Pohang 0; Jeju 0 Incheon 0.

SOUTH KOREA – REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Seoul	28	20	2	6	58	26	62
Jeju	28	17	8	3	54	25	59
Jeonbuk	28	15	6	7	54	36	51
Ulsan	28	15	5	8	47	30	50
Seongnam	28	13	9	6	46	26	48
Gyeongnam	28	13	9	6	41	32	48
Suwon	28	12	5	11	39	44	41
Busan	28	8	9	11	36	37	33
Pohang	28	8	9	11	39	48	33
Chunnam	28	8	8	12	40	49	32
Incheon	28	8	7	13	42	51	31
Gangwon	28	8	6	14	36	50	30
Daejeon	28	5	7	16	27	50	22
Gwangju	28	3	10	15	17	43	19
Daegu	28	5	4	19	28	57	19

Top 6 enter championship play-offs

THAILAND

THAILAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Muangthong	30	20	7	3	64	19	67
Buriram	30	17	12	1	51	19	63
Chonburi	30	17	9	4	57	28	60
Thai Port	30	13	9	8	41	29	48
Bangkok Glass	30	12	9	9	48	38	45
Pattaya	30	12	9	9	43	38	45
Osotspa	30	10	12	8	32	30	42
Samut	30	11	9	10	27	32	42
Tero Sasana	30	9	8	13	39	42	35
Rayong	30	8	9	13	35	52	33
Police	30	9	6	15	40	45	33
TOT-CAT	30	9	6	15	23	42	33
Phichit	30	7	11	12	32	46	32
Si Sa Ket (R)	30	6	8	16	36	54	26
B'kok Utd (R)	30	5	9	16	25	52	24
Thai Army (R)	30	5	7	18	27	54	22

UZBEKISTAN

UZBEKISTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bunyodkor	26	20	5	1	45	10	65
Pakhtakor	26	17	6	3	41	19	57
Nasaf	26	13	7	6	30	20	46
Shurtan	26	12	6	8	35	28	42
Mash'al	26	10	7	9	22	24	37
Metallurg	26	9	8	9	29	31	35
Andijan	26	9	7	10	28	29	34
Qizilqum	26	9	7	10	25	28	34
Navbahor	26	9	4	13	32	32	31
Neftchi	26	8	5	13	36	45	29
Olmaliq	26	8	5	13	32	41	29
Samarqand	26	6	9	11	28	33	27
Lokomotiv (R)	26	6	5	15	20	38	23
Xorazm (R)	26	2	7	17	21	46	13

VIETNAM

VIETNAM – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hanoi T&T	26	14	4	8	35	25	46
Hai Phong	26	14	3	9	41	34	45
Dong Thap	26	13	5	8	43	34	44
Khanh Hoa	26	13	4	9	42	42	43
Dong Tam	26	13	4	9	43	31	43
Da Nang	26	12	4	10	41	44	40
HAGL	26	11	6	9	34	27	39
Binh Duong	26	11	4	11	48	40	37
SLNA	26	9	10	7	36	26	37
Hoa Phat	26	10	6	10	41	44	36
Ninh Binh	26	8	10	8	33	34	34
Thanh Hoa	26	8	7	11	36	46	31
Navibank (R)	26	4	8	14	21	39	20
Nam Dinh (R)	26	3	3	20	19	47	12

OCEANIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 23: Hekari United (PNG) 1 Amicale (Van) 2; Koloale (Sol) 1 Lautoka (Fij) 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Amicale	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Lautoka	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Hekari Utd	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Koloale	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Group B

Oct 23: Auckland City (NZ) 3 Magenta (NC) 0.
Oct 24: Waitakere United (NZ) 3 Tefana (Tah) 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Auckland City	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Waitakere Utd	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Tefana	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Magenta	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

Group winners qualify for Final

Remaining matchdays:
2010 – November 13/14; December 3/4.
2011 – February 4/5; February 25/26; March 19

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

December 1
Sudamericana Cup Final, first leg
December 1 to 29
AFF Cup
December 3, 4 or 5
CAF Confederations Cup Final, second leg
December 7 and 8
Final UEFA Champions League group games
December 8
Sudamericana Cup Final, second leg
December 11
CECAFA Cup Final
December 8 to 18
Club World Cup
December 15 and 16
Final Europa League group games

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Famous Last Words

Who said what and why

"We just responded in kind"

After Palmeiras boss Luiz Felipe Scolari angrily brands reporters as "clowns", a number of hacks arrive at his next press conference sporting red noses

"I feel almost German these days"
Under heavy fire in his French homeland, fallen idol Franck Ribery naturally seeks refuge in his Bayern Munich family

"This sort of night out is important for the team. It's good for us to get to know each other better"
Schalke keeper Manuel Neuer responds to the critics after players from the underachieving Ruhr side celebrated a German Cup win by partying in a club until four in the morning

"Age doesn't counter. Spirit does"
Yuri Pudichev, the 56-year-old assistant coach of Belarus club Dinamo Brest who made an appearance as a late substitute in a game against BATE Borisov

Bonding...Neuer

"The trend of the last few years in Argentinian football has been the victory of physicality and fight over possession play. That has to change. We need to take a leaf out of the Spanish book"
New Argentina coach Sergio Batista flags up his priority on taking over from Diego Maradona

"It remains a scar that will only disappear when I wear the shirt again. My ban is almost finished, so I am highly motivated. I will play for my country until my legs won't allow it"
Patrice Evra on his desire to play for *Les Bleus* once again following the French team's debacle at the World Cup

"Some people cannot see a priest on a mountain of sugar"
Rafa Benitez takes a dig at his Liverpool successor Roy Hodgson, in Cantona fashion

"Every time I have gone to a club I've done better than my predecessor. And every time I've left my successor has done worse"
Roma coach Claudio Ranieri defends himself

"We do not enter into squabbles, although we have much to say. It's no secret, for example, that in London they have the highest crime rate compared with other European cities, and the highest level of alcohol consumption among young people"
Russia's 2018 bid chief Alexei Sorokin enters into a squabble with England

Outspoken...Sorokin

"Yes, I've been fired. I didn't expect it. Naturally I'm very bitter"
Gian Piero Gasperini explains the reason for his sacking by Genoa

"I just feel that I don't have the fire burning inside me anymore"
Franz Beckenbauer reveals why he won't stand for re-election to the FIFA executive committee

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